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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

ALTERITY AND HYBRIDITY IN ANGLOPHONE POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE: NGUGI, ACHEBE, p'BITEK AND NWAPA

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

EDWARD WINSTON BABATUNDE WOODE
Norman, Oklahoma
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A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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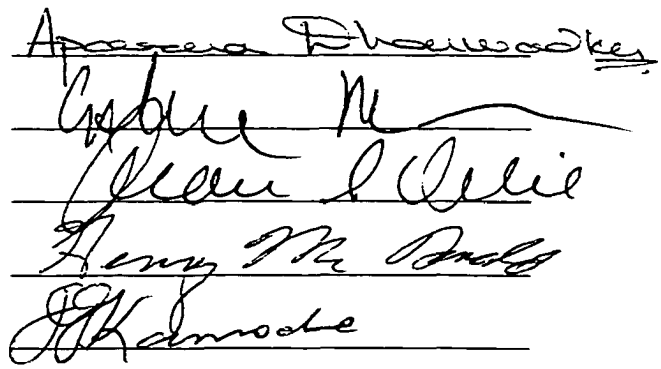

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This dissertation attests to my fondness for Anglophone postcolonial literature, and so-called minority discourse. It is dedicated to all culturally-hybridized subjects still on a quest for true identity.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines postcoloniality in the contexts of "alterity" and "hybridity." In postcolonial theory, both terms are as problematic as "postcolonial." The primary texts discussed here treat alterity as the fusion of native 'self' and Western 'other,' and hybridity as the disruption of native identity and simultaneous fusion with its Westernized counterpart, making both different and the same. In the non-fictive, Anglophone postcolonial landscape, processes of cultural and ideological embrace differ from a purely historical and geographical standpoint. In fiction, from an epistemological perspective, these processes are the same. For example, in works by Ngugi wa Thiongo, Chinua Achebe, Okot p'Bitek and Flora Nwapa, the Western/native encounter produces similar results, despite the different chronotopes (times and tribes) in which characters are located. Specifically, The River Between, Petals of Blood, Arrow of God, Anthills of the Savannah, "Song of Lawino," "Song of Ocol" and One is Enough are praxes of otherness and fusion. In these works, the major characters straddle two different cultures and embrace dissimilar ideologies, a practice that undermines their identities.

The dissertation applies Homi Bhabha's ideas concerning hybridity, Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of novelistic discourse and Emmanuel Levinas' philosophy of alterity and transcendence to the discussion of the primary texts, which are themselves intertextual. Together, they constitute a unified discourse that not only recognizes differences in native structures, but also acknowledges the indelible inscription of Westernization on postcolonial subjectivity. It is a discourse in which hybridity

dismantles otherness and rejects hegemony, and alterity is defined in terms of geography, tribe, class and gender.

Chapter 1 examines the oppositional relationship between Christianity and traditional religion, in the colonial landscape, and suggests that Christianity triumphs because of the fissures in tribal society. It establishes similarities between The River Between and Arrow of God.

Chapter 2 also finds similarities between Petals of Blood and Anthills of the Savannah. It explores the ramifications of Westernization, and the role of politics in the postcolonial nation/state. Characters' sociolects are dialogized and their subjectivities become undermined.

Chapter 3 deals with alterity and hybridity in the context of gender, and theorizes that power relations, in domestic space, are similar in two different cultural environments (Acoli in "Song of Lawino" and "Song of Ocol"; Igbo in One is Enough). This chapter looks at female resistance to patriarchal ideology and women's prominent voices in the postcolonial landscape.

INTRODUCTION

Current research in Anglophone postcolonial literature, while extensive, does not deal with the similarities between texts that present hybridity as the arbiter of varied alterities. Prominent critics discuss hybridity and alterity in contexts of culture, ideology and hegemony, but they do not explore these issues intertextually, with Anglophone postcolonial works. This dissertation does. However, any discussion of postcoloniality is incomplete, if it does not include Mikhail Bakhtin, Homi Bhabha, Robert Young, Edward Said, Kwame Anthony Appiah and Gayatri Spivak. These are the main ones. Others are: Sara Suleri, Aijaz Ahmad, Ngugi wa Thiongo and Anne McClintock, to name a few. Bakhtin is very important because, having suffered from Stalinist persecution, he is sensitive to the plight of others who have been victimized by colonization. He considers the novel a tool of resistance. Bhabha defines "nation" as an imaginary, ambivalent construction, replete with cultural temporality that inevitably makes it an unstable social reality. Bhabha's relevance is that he helps strengthen my argument that the postcolonial nation/state itself is a hybrid, constantly changing, and postcolonial subjectivities are also hybrids. Hybridity is not just the result of the West encountering Africa; it is also what ensues when varied tribal structures, within Africa, engage each other. Some critics, notably Spivak and McClintock, theorize about a link between postcoloniality, feminism and poststructuralism. They offer a critique of postcolonial theory itself, from a postcolonized perspective. The same can be said for Sara Suleri and Aijaz Ahmad. McClintock believes there can be no adequate comprehension of postcoloniality without taking into consideration issues of gender,

class and race. Spivak contends that women are "subalterns" in postcolonial texts, without a voice. She says that if they had a voice, they would cease being subalterns and, consequently, lose the "post" in their postcoloniality – which would also place them in a neo-colonial position. According to Spivak, the subject cannot be represented because he/she is a multiplicity, not an "individual agent," and there are two types of subject: a) subject of desire/power and b) subject of the oppressed. These critics, together with Bhabha, Young and Bakhtin reject homogeneity, hegemony or cultural and ideological superiority. Young is important because his discussion of Victorian theories of hybridity, in a racial context, helps us appreciate its other dimensions. Bhabha is relevant because of his belief that cultural struggle and identity are linked, that postcoloniality is a product of hybridity, spatial displacement, and that hybridity is a strategy for survival.

Bakhtin is important in postcolonial theory because of his view that novelistic discourse flourishes in the periphery, and that characters' sociolects are dialogically related. His ideas are relevant to any discourse on postcoloniality, especially those relating to novelistic polyphony. For example, famous postcolonial theorists (e.g. Gayatri Spivak, Aijaz Ahmad) have appropriated Bakhtin's semantic categories, his "transcendental migrancy of meaning", to fit their theories:

> ...so it is that when the newest crop of postcolonial critics write of 'selving' and 'othering' and 'double-voicing' and the like, they are willy-nilly recycling at perhaps one or two removes a reach-me-down Bakhtinian vocabulary – and not always in a way that does justice to the tacit or acknowledged source of those expressions (Pechey 349).

Although Bakhtin himself did not coin the term "dialogism", he made tremendous contributions to twentieth-century epistemology and linguistics (incidentally, he never considered himself a literary theorist or critic; he always saw himself as a philosopher).

Bakhtin theorizes dialogism as a "version of relativity" (Holquist 98). Thanks to Bakhtin, Holquist believes, literary texts can also be construed as social texts that use speech utterances to encode relative positions in human relations within social and ideological contexts. Bakhtin's dialogic principle is based on alterity, a consciousness of center/periphery relations that is "the differential relation between a center and all that is not that center" (98). For Holquist, dialogism refers both to dualism as well as multiplicity "in human perception". Holquist uses the term "logocentrism" to mean any discourse that seeks to perpetuate the center, that assumes "ontological privilege", "a mystified illusion of presence"; such is what postcolonial discourse challenges, he says. He further states that, to Bakhtin, 'center' is a relative term, without any "claim to absolute privilege", and that Bakhtin conceives of 'self' as dialogic: "Whatever else it is, self/other is a relation of simultaneity. No matter how conceived, simultaneity deals with ratios of same and different in space and time, which is why Bakhtin was always so concerned with space/time" (99).

Bakhtin theorizes that utterances have implied, hidden meanings that are different from their literal interpretations. Words are not just about communication; they are also part of the broader context of social interaction. Speech, what Bakhtin calls "parole", has ideological implications that differ from the semantic role of language ("langue"). Thus, "speech" is synonymous with "discourse", and discourse is always dialogical, oppositional. Discourse is associated with perspective, sociolect, and it is a truism that perspectives differ. Bakhtin also posits that, while a sentence is a linguistic unit, utterance becomes a unit of discourse. It is through discourse that we reveal our intention, and discourse is the tool of ideology, the means with which we attempt to

influence others. According to Bakhtin, 'self' and 'other' are mutually dependent and, epistemologically, any cognition of self necessitates cognition of another, different self. One subjectivity's consciousness is not the same as another subjectivity's perception because a 'self' does not see itself as others see it. Thus, all identities are split, and the fusion of 'self' and 'other' occurs through interiorization. Delineation and parody are good examples of hybridization, of using novelistic language for particular purposes. Bakhtin theorizes that parody orients the utterance of 'self' to that of an 'other'; it recontextualizes it. Bakhtin also says that double-voicedness is a hybrid construction because, even though it belongs to one speaker, it contains multiple utterances or belief systems. He posits that the novel itself is double-languaged and double-accented, a site for the competition of varied consciousnesses. For Bakhtin, the novel is a heteroglot, a "system of images of languages." Novelistic characters, he continues, are "images" of language because they are depicted through their own voices and the voices of others (including the author's); that is, their consciousnesses are subjective (polyphonic), as well as objective (monologic). Therefore, Bakhtin believes language constitutes the only reality in a novel. He theorizes that the novel favors "processes of hybridization as literary and extraliterary discourse genres, written and oral genres, modern and traditional genres come together in polyphonic dialogue" (Petrilli, 106). Two or more dissimilar utterances constitute differentiated speech which, in turn, leads to "heteroglossia" or multiplicity of voices. According to Bakhtin, the novel is a site for the operation and performance of language, and novelistic discourse is a linguistic variation of social discourse – which makes the novel the best example of a realist genre. It displays social,

discursive reality. In other words, colonial discourse is a tool of hegemony that seeks to perpetuate cultural and racial differences.

In postcolonial theory, the term "hybridity" is conventionally associated with Homi Bhabha (though, in reality, it was Mikhail Bakhtin who, in his essay "Discourse in the Novel" first came up with the notion). As defined by Bhabha, hybridity is the condition of doubleness that subtly undermines the selves of both colonizer and colonized. He says hybridity occurs through the intersection of two separate identities, and the new identity that emerges is not just a double identification, but also one that has its own practices and symbols. For Bhabha, "all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity," and consequently no culture is "pure" or "essential". It is a "problematic of colonial representation," colonialist disavowal is reversed, and colonial discourse is undermined by "other" discourses ("Signs Taken" 156). Colonialism produced hybridity, but did not succeed in suppressing nativism (Bhabha). Hybridity means native identity becomes a "continued agony" (154), and hybridity is a signifier of "the productivity of colonial power", and the reversal of the process of domination. It is "the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects" (154). The precise moment when the dominant discourse loses its univocal hegemony, or meaning, is also a moment when the critic can discern the movements of alterity in the colonial text; this precise moment constitutes hybridity. Thus, the "intentional hybrid" of Bakhtin is now an active moment of challenge and resistance against dominant culture. For Bhabha, hybridity is synonymous with "in-between reality" (The Location of Culture 13). For example, Europeanism is the boundary from which postcoloniality (i.e. cultural and ideological hybridity) begins.

Cultural hybridity mediates and reconciles the liminal spaces that are occupied by differences, without creating hierarchies, or assigning values to such differences (4). Postcoloniality needs the ex-empire's metropole to define itself, despite its resistance to it. Cultural hybridity is the tool that postcoloniality uses to "reinscribe" its modernity (6). Bhabha asserts that global capitalism, in impoverishing the Third World, also provides a "cultural passage" through a "massive economic and political diaspora" of the modern world and, consequently, ushers in cultural displacement. He applauds Frantz Fanon for not romanticizing history, even though Fanon himself acknowledges the importance of the past in asserting identity (especially in the case of colonized subjects whose traditions and histories have been repressed by the colonizer). According to Bhabha, all postcolonial texts are "informed" by historical specificities and cultural diversities (read alterities).

The modern world, Bhabha continues, is "unhomely" or replete with extra-territorial conditions and cross-cultural initiations. Incidentally, feminism disrupts patriarchy by exposing "the unhomely moment in civil society" (11); it redraws the boundaries that separate public from private space, and domesticates the public sphere. Space and time, psychology and sociology develop an "interstitial" relationship that threatens alterity or binary oppositions, Bhabha further states. In the chapter entitled "The Commitment to Theory", he challenges the assumption that theory is for the socially and culturally privileged; he also says that the epistemological dynamic is not necessarily rendered in oppositional terms of oppressor/oppressed, center/periphery, negative/positive. For him, literary theory has, for too long, been Eurocentric (e.g. Derrida, Lacan, poststructuralism), resulting in such theoretical critique becoming an ally

of Western hegemony, which cannot occur without injecting alterity or difference. This is achieved through its use of language as "another power ploy of the culturally privileged Western elite to produce a discourse of the Other that reinforces its own power-knowledge equation" (20-21). Hybridity equals the difference within a subject that resides in an in-between reality. Difference and otherness are "discursive conditions for the circulation and recognition of a political subject and a public truth" – all part of an "agnostic process" in epistemology, in gaining knowledge (23). According to Bhabha, the event of independence itself is a "hybrid movement of political change" because it valorizes change and translates "elements that are neither the One, nor the Other ... but something else besides."

This "something else", in my view, is a postcoloniality that challenges precoloniality and coloniality. Bhabha considers Western critical theory an institution with immense power – what he calls 'ideological Eurocentricity":

> ...Critical theory often engages with texts within the familiar traditions and conditions of colonial anthropology either to universalize their meaning within its own cultural and academic discourse, or to sharpen its internal critique of the Western logocentric sign, the idealist subject, or indeed the illusions and delusions of civil society. This is a familiar maneuver of theoretical knowledge, where, having opened up the chasm of cultural difference, a mediator or metaphor of otherness must be found to contain the effects of difference. In order to be institutionally effective as a discipline, the knowledge of cultural difference must be made to foreclose on the other; difference and otherness thus become the fantasy of a certain cultural space or, indeed, the certainty of a form of theoretical knowledge that deconstructs the epistemological 'edge' of the West (31).

Robert Young has an alternative, historical approach to hybridity, foregrounded on "race" and "culture". He says that, historically, "Englishness" has always been

characterized by instability and replete with a desire for otherness. For Young, all cultures are dichotomous because of their essentially inherent "dissonance", and the West is duplicitous because it contains an essence of otherness, an "Occidental and an Oriental at once" (Colonial Desire 1). "Today the Englishness of the past is often represented in terms of fixity, of certainty, centeredness, homogeneity, as something unproblematically identical with itself ... it is noticeable that in the literary sphere such forms of Englishness are always represented as other, as something which other people possess" (2). English canonical literary works (e.g. those written by the Bronte sisters, Thomas Hardy, Graham Greene, Joyce Cary, to name a few), in Young's view, obsess about identity, class, gender and race, since Victorian literature is pervaded by themes of culture and hybridity. Before 1850, Young continues, culture in the West was defined in terms of homogeneity (i.e. as an organic, traditional and stable system), but after 1850, heterogeneous elements began to creep in. In addition, Young sees pidgin English as a linguistic mode of disrupting and fusing cultural hegemony, and language and sexuality played vital roles in Victorian theories of hybridity, race and culture. Young defines culture as "always a dialectical process, inscribing and expelling its own alterity" (30). Young's and Bhabha's definitions of cultural hybridity are similar, and it proves that the dynamic of hybridization 'per se' transcends chronology. It occurs in Victorian as well as Anglophone, postcolonial literary texts.

Young is very important in any discussion about hybridity because of the way he traces the historical, semantic connotations and ramifications of the term. For example, he suggests that the meaning of hybridity in Victorian England was largely physiological, grounded on biology and botany (because it drew heavily from its Latin etymology of

"half-breed"). Nineteenth-century meanings of "hybridity" also included ideas of intra-racial fertility. From 1862, he says the Oxford English Dictionary began including a physiological, linguistic definition of 'hybrid' as "a composite word formed of elements belonging to different languages." Later, the term became a synonym for "mongrelity" or racial crossing, "the focus of racial and cultural attention and anxiety" (16). Even Mathew Arnold of "Culture and Anarchy" fame developed a theory of English culture as being multicultural, of Englishness as a vibrant racial mixture of Danes, Angles, Normans, Celts. "In fact, it became increasingly common in the later nineteenth century for the English to invoke Defoe's account of 'that Heterogeneous Thing, An Englishman', and to define themselves as a hybrid or "mongrel half-bred Race' (17). Today, Young believes, hybridity encompasses contrafusion, fusion, disjunction, and assimilation, and it can also be viewed as "creolization," the creation of something new, by the act of combining, "which can then be set against the old form, of which it is partly made up" (25). From nineteenth-century racial theories of hybridity evolved social ones that postulate the incongruities of disparate bodies based on sexual conjunction of the races.

Young also accepts Bakhtin's philological meaning of "hybridity", one that "delineates the way in which language, even within a single sentence, can be double-voiced" (20). Young says Bakhtin sees hybridization as the capability of one voice to ironize and expose (unmask) the other within the same utterance. According to Young, Bakhtin's notion of hybridity is itself a hybrid concept. He says Bakhtin divides hybridity into two kinds: "intentional", or when the artist deliberately dialogizes hybridity by setting different points of view against each other; and "organic" (when the fusion is

mute or opaque, and does not entail conscious oppositions – e.g. just a mere fusion that produces a new language, object or world view). Thus, postcoloniality is a form of "intentional hybridity" in the Bakhtinian sense, because it "enables a contestatory activity, a politicized setting of cultural differences against each other dialogically. Hybridity therefore, as in the racial model, involves an antithetical movement of coalescence and antagonism" (22). Young also maintains that hybridity, per se, becomes an example of hybridity, through the act of fusing and separating doubleness, and that Bakhtin places great importance on the moment of unmasking by one voice of another, in a single utterance (which is also a moment when hybridization occurs).

In this dissertation, "hybridity" is defined in the context of dialectical synthesis, the juxtaposition or interaction of conflicting forces, and it is the antithesis of "alterity." Hybridity disrupts and fuses unlike entities, and renders difference into sameness. I also use "alterity" as a synonym for "otherness," and define it as the mixture of 'self' and 'other.' My view is that hybridity is a dismantling of the notion of otherness, and its existence presupposes the absence of hegemony. The historicity of "hybridity" is its valorization as the foundation of a stable identity, and contemporary definitions of the term highlight its role in decentering identity. In the primary Anglophone texts with which this dissertation deals, characters are sites for the fusion of indigenous 'self' and Westernized 'other,' and it undermines their identity.

The dissertation applies Bakhtin's concepts of chronotopes (from the Greek "chronos", meaning "time" and "topos" which means "space") and dialogism to Ngugi wa Thiongo's Petals of Blood (1977) and The River Between (1965); Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God (1964) and Anthills of the Savannah (1987); Okot p'Bitek's "Song of

Lawino" (1966) and "Song of Ocol" (1970) and Flora Nwapa's One is Enough (1981). "Chronotope" literally means time/space, and it implies the fusion of the two in any literary work. It is a means of evaluating fictional time, space and characters and how they relate to one another. As praxes, Petals of Blood, The River Between, Anthills of the Savannah, Arrow of God, Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol, and One is Enough, in my opinion, use pre-colonialism, colonialism, class, and gender as chronotopes. These works appropriate some elements from the Western canon, Africanize them in order to give them new meanings, and this itself is a process of hybridization. They are polyphonous, with many voices, and their major characters' perspectives are dialogized. Moreover, they fuse and contrafuse Western and indigenous ideas which, in my view, generates ideological hybridity. Their preoccupation with the past is a manifestation of 'colonial desire' (to borrow Robert Young's phrase), a looking back to the precolonial, nativist era. It is this element of postcolonial gaze that makes it possible for the texts to construct alterity in binary terms (e.g. Igbo/non-Igbo; Kenyan/Indian; Abazon/Bassa; White man/non-white man). In generic terms, it is the classic rendition of alterity in the context of 'self/other'.

Texts question as well as reply to other texts, and are diachronically related. That is, they engage in a dialogue with similar texts to constitute a "tradition" which is the main link between subject and object in hermeneutics, meaning that in conventional epistemology all knowledge depends on a cognitive subject (Haidu 673). Close reading and analysis of the texts reveal intertextuality, a dialogue on difference and sameness, vis a vis postcolonial identity. The historicity of otherness is that it has always been located on sites that are replete with dissatisfaction and anxiety. Every reader engages in

semiotic decoding, and no text is the exclusive preserve of 'literature', since texts can be anything: social, political, cultural as well as literary (680-681). This means the texts covered in this dissertation are also social, political, ideological and cultural discourses. They are about antagonistic relationships between characters and differences that exist within the structures in which they are located. Their common denominator is a shared historicity of colonialism and postcolonialism, or moments of disruption and potential assimilation ushered by political independence. The ensuing varied attempts at bridging chasms, or reconciling differences constitute the dominant theme in these works.

The term "postcolonial" is foregrounded on a politics of resistance, and problematizes the relationship between center and periphery. However, it is dangerous to consider the postcolonial only as a textual phenomenon, or as merely discourse on power relations. We must also view it as a discourse on difference and coexistence that involves relationships (whether resistance or appropriation) to the language and culture of the metropole, the center. Postcolonial theory is often compared with Edward Said's Orientalism, his notion that totalizing discourses represent the Other in a non-complex fashion. Orientalism taints the postcolonial by making it post-Oriental (Mishra, Hodge 402). In addition, postcolonial theory is an offshoot of Bakhtin's theory of the polyphonic novel, and postcoloniality is characterized by historical and cultural specificity – with fissures and oppositions. Thus, there is no such thing as homogeneity in the postcolonial condition (Mishra, Hodge). The same is true for the characters in Ngugi's works and the others in this discussion.

As postcolonial texts, they displace the colonial text and express a "fulfillment of desire in [their] relationship with the absent Other" (407). There are two forms of

'postcolonialism' (without the hyphen) that encompass subjugation through imposition of imperial structures: "oppositional" and "complicit". The postcolonial text, consequently, is "always a complex and hybridized formation" (409). Oppositional postcolonialism includes racism, political resistance and a second language (in Achebe's case, it is pidgin and for Ngugi, it is Gikuyu), while complicit postcolonialism has the common figure of a comprador, albeit not a universal one in all postcolonial texts (413).

My primary objective, in this dissertation, is to investigate instances of alterity and hybridity in various contexts: epistemological, cultural, ideological and linguistic. First, the term 'alterity', as used in this dissertation, is synonymous with 'otherness' (from its Latin etymology, 'alter': the state of being different, which will also include 'ipseity' and 'community' – Oxford English Dictionary). Second, I use 'hybridity' as Bhabha and Bakhtin define it: in its double-voiced, ambivalent, undermining connotations. Thus, anthropological and racial notions do not apply here; rather, alterity and hybridity are examined in a largely social context (e.g. class, ideology, gender). The dissertation assumes the potency of Bakhtin's and Bhabha's theories; it does not set out to re-explain, prove or disprove them. It is a truism that, as theories, there is no correct way to interpret or apply them – as long as the exercise is reasonable. Third, I explore what happens to native culture when it is confronted by Westernization, and how the postcolonial situation in these Anglophone texts modifies hybridity and alterity. The best way to show how is to engage in a close reading of the texts, rather than take refuge in obscurantist, generalized theoretical statements. Fourth, I establish similarities between Petals of Blood, The River Between, Anthills of the Savannah, Arrow of God, Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol, and One is Enough in their treatment of identity. As praxes

and signifiers, these works operate on the same pole or point of concentration of interest, namely, a depiction of otherness and sameness that has ramifications of intertextuality. In other words, because they employ difference and sameness as axes for portraying postcoloniality, they are the same, intertextually speaking. Consequently, at the risk of sounding contradictory, Anglophone postcolonial literature of East and West Africa, so far as Ngugi, Achebe, p'Bitek and Nwapa are concerned, may be poles apart (chronotopically) but have the same poles (hybridity/alterity) in their representation of postcoloniality. I also argue that, in Anglophone postcolonial writing, location shapes ideology chronotopically, not geographically. In the contexts of alterity and hybridity, and also in an epistemological sense, there is no difference between East and West African Anglophone texts. Postcolonial subjects in an Ngugi novel are very similar to those in an Achebe novel or one by Nwapa; their works explore the same issues as p'Bitek's poetry. Gender themes are the same for Lawino (Song of Lawino and Ocol) and Amaka (One is Enough). In addition, Song of Lawino and Ocol is as much about female empowerment as is Anthills of the Savannah or The River Between. In p'Bitek's long poem, the two antagonists belong to the same tribe, but they embrace different ideologies. Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah and Nwapa's One is Enough have female postcolonial protagonists that are more liberated than the female characters in The River Between. Lastly, Petals of Blood and Anthills of the Savannah deal with the postcolonial state, with all its deformities. Thus, I have chosen the strategy of juxtaposing one West African text with another from East Africa, to make the case that hybridity and alterity transcend nation (space), in the Anglophone postcolonial context. Britain colonized both East and West Africa – two regions with different tribal and political histories, but similar

epistemological implications in their literary productions. Hence, postcoloniality and postcolonial characters in an Ngugi novel are the same as in works by Achebe, p'Bitek and Nwapa.

Conventionally, postcoloniality is not theorized as a condition that is homogenous, due to the fact that there are varied experiences and histories associated with it. For example, the colonial conditions that existed in Nigeria were not the same as those in Kenya. Nevertheless, if one assumes that hybridization is also contralateral (i.e. that it is situated on, and affects different sites), then it does not matter where the postcolonial subject is geographically located; what matters is how he or she reacts. On one hand, Ngugi's characters are different from Achebe's in so far as issues relating to ipseity or self are concerned; the same is true for Nwapa and p'Bitek. On the other hand, all these characters are similar when viewed as postcolonial sites for collision of differences, in the abstract epistemological sense. They are voices and consciousnesses positioned relatively in dialogic relationships, which implies that the texts are polyphonous. In this Bakhtinian sense, Ngugi, Achebe, p'Bitek and Nwapa utilize similar chronotopes (tribe, nation, history, gender) in depicting identity and hybridity.

This dissertation also views 'hybridity' as constituting 'duplicity' (i.e. that the postcolonial subject is culturally and ideologically split and self-conflicted, but historically situated). My thesis is that hybridity is necessarily a reconciliation of various alterities, and it needs ideology to accomplish this feat. In the writings of Ngugi, Achebe Nwapa and p'Bitek, hybridity not only undermines the postcolonial self; it is also the antidote for chaos and it neutralizes the negative effects of otherness. It is a useful term that helps explain the relationships between postcolonial selves and their "partial and

double repetition of otherness" (Bhabha, Location 97) – native and Western. In addition, 'cultural hybridity' as I use it, is the act of connecting literature and history with the present moment, plus the aping of Western values.

Anglophone, postcolonial authors (East and West African) present society and characters as complex and ambivalent, in which the 'self' becomes a cultural heteroglot, an inscription of the social, economic, political and ideological worlds inhabited by their authors. Ngugi, Achebe, p'Bitek and Nwapa contextualize their narrators and characters, many of whom are located in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial (with the hyphen). They are located in tradition, and modernity; in history and the present. The dissertation examines cultural specificity and hybridity (i.e. reciprocity and interdependence), the similarities in portraits of internalization of Western values, and resistance to such values. As postcolonial discourses, Petals of Blood, The River Between, Anthills of the Savannah, Arrow of God, Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol, and One is Enough are critiques of certain concepts and assumptions of the so-called center (Europeanism) and the periphery (traditionalism, unchecked desire for nativism). These texts are signifiers of postcolonial double-voicedness that evolves out of power and gender relations – and otherness that results from cognitive, antagonistic positioning of various selves. They offer a portrait of interaction of the pre-colonial and colonial, not a displacement of one by the other. Their protagonists are simultaneously located in tribal, traditional and modern space. The texts are also polemical. Ngugi, for example, presents a radical critique of Westernization and capitalism in Petals of Blood and Christianity in The River Between; he defends nativism and Marxism vigorously. For Ngugi, the writer is also a potential politician (for Achebe, he is a teacher). As a Marxist, African

nationalist, Ngugi prefers Africa's pluralistic, communal structure that predated colonialism. Colonialism, in his opinion, destroyed African society and replaced it with capitalism, with the help of Christianity and Western education. Ngugi advocates the indigenization of language in African literature, because he sees English as the tool of colonization and African elites. Thus, Anglophone postcolonial writing is, according to Ngugi, "Afro-European literature", if it is written in English. Achebe disagrees; he applauds the English language's indispensable role in achieving linguistic unity, given the tribal and linguistic differences in many regions of Africa.

CHAPTER 1

The Precolonial/Colonial Dialectic: Ngugi's The River Between and Achebe's Arrow of God

Ngugi wa Thiongo (1938), the Gikuyu writer from Kenya, has published many novels, plays and articles. His writings champion the rights of workers and peasants not only in East Africa, but all over Africa as well; he is generally considered a Marxist and pessimist vis-a-vis political and social conditions in postcolonial Africa. Ngugi adores Africa's past and advocates the use of indigenous languages in African literary texts, by African authors and critics:

> I have said elsewhere how I find it very contradictory in Africa today and elsewhere in the academies of the world to hear of scholars of African realities but who do not know a word of the languages of the environment of which they are experts. Do you think that Cambridge [University] here would give me a job as Professor of French Literature if I confessed that I did not know a word of French? And yet schools in Africa and abroad are peopled by experts ... who do not have to demonstrate any acquaintance let alone expertise in any African language. They hold chairs and produce PhD's without the requirement of an African language. It is difficult to blame this on institutions abroad when they are merely taking the lead from the practice of African universities. The result is the marginalization of African languages in the academy at home. They do not control their own home turf because tongues from Europe rule their home base ("Europhonism, Universities" 7-8).

He is very suspicious of Western-educated African writers in English because, in his opinion, they use a europhone voice that cannot credibly convey an authentic message; they are compromised by Westernization. The irony is that Ngugi himself is tainted by Westernization. He studied at Makerere University in Uganda and Leeds University, England. He taught English at various universities and participated in numerous literary

conferences in Africa, Europe and the United States. In spite of his crusade on behalf of the indigenization of African literature and culture, Ngugi's own writings are heavily dependent on the Western canon. His novels frequently quote from famous English and American writers, especially Shakespeare, William Blake and Walt Whitman and, even though he blames Christianity for colluding with British colonialism, his own works quote extensively from the Bible. Anthonia Kalu, in her essay "African Literature and the Traditional Arts: Speaking Art, Molding Theory," apparently supports Ngugi's desire to replace English with native languages in African literature:

> In the effort – to write the African story in European languages, Africans seem to have written themselves out of a lived African history into an alien and traditional narrative world, that narrative world continues to close itself to Africans focused on a reality invented for the service of an extant colonial imperative ... As a result of its history, the assumptions of contemporary African literature continue to depend on the anthropological, insisting that Africans in general and Africanists in particular should rise to the project to (re-)member and re-deploy African thought (48).

Kalu's implication that English dilutes the potency of African writers' narrative strategy, message and interferes with their supposed nationalistic project is, in my view, misguided. It is also not supported by the evidence. For example, can she honestly say that, because The River Between is written in English, Ngugi's fervent championing of nativism is weakened? In addition, would Waiyaki's cultural predicament have been more clearly expressed, if the novel had been in Gikuyu? I do not think so. Incidentally, Kalu contradicts herself, in saying English has an "enabling capacity" to make Africa's story accessible to Westerners, while simultaneously closing the Western narrative world to Africans. She forgets that the literary encounter between non-Western texts, their

authors, Western publishers and readers is, like all other encounters, not a hermetic or mutually exclusive process. In the modern contexts of global communication and publishing, it is impossible for the Western world to, in her words, "close itself to Africans."

Ngugi's second novel, The River Between (1965), belongs to the same thematic category as two of his other works: Weep Not Child (1964) and A Grain of Wheat (1967). All three are historical and deal with native resistance to foreign culture and ideology. They are also semi-biographical because they draw heavily from Ngugi's childhood experiences relating to education, religious conflicts, British colonization and the Mau Mau resistance in Kenya that began in the 1950s. These novels are chronologically related and sequential, but The River Between was written first, though published second. "Probably Ngugi delayed its publication because he was dissatisfied with it, and only offered it to a publisher after some polishing and pruning" (Palmer 11). Weep Not Child is also about the education of young Kenyans and The River Between draws heavily on the Independent Schools Movement, which was a Kenyan-controlled and communal effort to run local schools, as opposed to those administered by British missionaries. The treatment of a love affair between the male protagonist (Waiyaki) and a woman from a different camp (Nyambura), in The River Between, is similar to the treatment of the romance between Njoroge and Mwihaki in Weep Not Child. Both novels explore fissures in tribal society but, thematically, The River Between predates Weep Not Child; colonialism triumphs over Gikuyu nationalism in Weep Not Child, but in The River Between neither wins.

The River Between covers approximately fifty years of Gikuyu history, British colonialism and missionary activities in Kenya. The novel begins with division in tribal society. It is not, however, about "conflict based on difference, but on a variation from a common background" (Howard 97). The two villages on the hill country, Makuyu and Kameno, are always arguing. Makuyu is the headquarters of missionaries and converted Christians, and Kameno is the stronghold of animists and traditionalists. Thus, both are sites for political, cultural and religious conflict. Ngugi treats history and cosmic mythology as "ossified early in the novel – each ridge imposing a ritual cosmic order on the past in an effort to support its claim to exclusive loyalty from the Gikuyu people" (98), and "all activity and motivation depends on the land and its ritualized geography" (99). In-between these ridges is Honia river which plays an important, symbolic role. It stands for mediation and spiritual sustenance; villagers often go there to meditate and seek comfort during periods of personal distress. Honia also symbolizes Gikuyu history and tribal solidarity, for it is the only structure that is unaffected by time as well as colonialism. There are six major characters in The River Between. First, there is Waiyaki – a young visionary from Kameno whose ambition is to spread education on the hill country. He is in love with Nyambura. Second, we have Nyambura and Muthoni – Joshua's daughters, who are both Christians. Nyambura, the elder, is more fervent in her faith than Muthoni who is more attuned to Gikuyu practices. Next is Joshua, their father and head of the Gikuyu converts to Christianity; he is a fanatic and fiery preacher, suspected by others and considered a comprador by tribal leaders. Kabonyi, Waiyaki's rival, is head of the "Kiama", the secret cultural society that challenges Christianity and colonialism. Chege, Waiyaki's father, is a traditionalist and also an expert in tribal

mythology, rituals and history. Lastly, there is Livingstone, the head of the white missionaries stationed at Siriana, a much more urban enclave.

The main themes are: conflict between traditional religion and Christianity; conservative versus progressive ideology; the role of education in tribal society; and circumcision as a tool to maintain tribal purity. Underlining all these is the novel's subtle message that change is inevitable in any society. Waiyaki would like to be the principal agent of change by making sure that Gikuyu youths are educated. He believes Western education, the "white man's magic", is the best weapon that the Gikuyu can have in their struggle against British hegemony. Waiyaki does not consider Christianity a threat; he sees very little difference between it and tribal religion, as far as worshipping a supreme being is concerned. By focusing on education, he is able to insulate himself from the religious controversies that engulf others. He is in love with Nyambura, but it is much later in the story that he musters the courage to tell her. Nyambura, too, takes a long time to reciprocate because she is afraid of her father, Joshua. He will object to his daughter marrying a non-Christian. Nyambura's sister, Muthoni, is like Waiyaki; she shares his desire for reconciliation among the residents of Makuyu and Kameno. Waiyaki views education as the means to accomplish this objective, while Muthoni uses circumcision to send a message that she, a Christian, can also belong to the tribe. Joshua opposes Muthoni's circumcision, and disowns her after she goes through the ritual, which is eventually the cause of her death. Tribal elders on both ridges take Muthoni's death as a sign that Christianity is bad medicine for native culture, and Joshua explains it as punishment for her sins, mixing with the heathens, and disobeying her father.

Meanwhile, the rivalry between Kabonyi and Waiyaki intensifies. The elders are divided. They back Kabonyi's efforts to preserve Gikuyu culture, but also admire Waiyaki's passion for spreading education. Young Gikuyus give Waiyaki their wholehearted support. Kabonyi has a final showdown with Waiyaki, in a meeting called by the Kiama to make peace between the rivals. He accuses Waiyaki of betraying the tribe, of colluding with Joshua (because of Waiyaki's love affair with Nyambura) and the Christians (Waiyaki once visited Joshua's church and participated in its religious service). Waiyaki denies it, but the Kiama is swayed by Kabonyi's powerful oratory and finds Waiyaki guilty. The reader is not told what the sentence is, but the novel gives a very strong hint that it is death.

The River Between and Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God have similar chronotopes (British colonialism and collision of ideologies). Both respond to British presence in Africa by going back to history, the pre-colonial era. The River Between and Arrow of God, as dialogic praxes, are similar; both have multiple, conflicting voices of characters that echo within their authors' voices. They differ in their particular uses of ideology and nativism. In The River Between, education is a tool for smoothening over tribal differences, while Arrow of God uses Christianity to achieve the same objective. Achebe's novel is the religious sequel to his secular, more cultural Things Fall Apart whose major character, Okonkwo, resists colonialism unsuccessfully (he commits suicide). Ezeulu, the chief character of Arrow of God, tolerates colonialism. Ngugi wa Thiongo condemns hybridity in The River Between and he does not want the Gikuyu to embrace cultural hybridity, the fusion of native practices and Westernization. The River Between "embodies contradictory possibilities and leaves us to arbitrate between them"

(Cook and Okenimpke 46). Christianity and Western education are suspect and compromise is difficult, despite the numerous opportunities that the protagonists have to bring it about. Consequently, Waiyaki, Nyambura and her sister Muthoni are consumed by their efforts to mediate between Gikuyu conservatives and Christian converts. Gikuyu tradition is engaged in a struggle with Westernization, threatened by an 'other'. However, the Gikuyu are more worried about hybridized tribesmen and women (e.g. Joshua) than they are about the British. The Gikuyu are not really worried about the British as such. Rather, it is hybridized Gikuyus, those who straddle two different cultures and appropriate Western ideology that bother them (Waiyaki and Muthoni).

Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God is also about the collision of structures which react, often resist and sometimes assimilate each other. Characters in this novel, like those in The River Between, prefer tradition and conservative ideology; they are wary of Europeanism and progressive ideology, British colonialism and Christianity. These colonized subjects re-evaluate themselves in their encounter with the colonizer, and their self-evaluation takes place in a Bakhtinian chronotope of evangelism (i.e. the actual events of the spread of Christianity), Westernization (i.e. British education and culture), and tribal history (i.e. the glorious pre-colonial era). In both novels, ideology is largely dependent on spatial structures because it is shaped by location. For example, in Arrow of God, Ezeulu is located in native and Western space, the pre-colonial and colonial, and embraces traditional religion and Western education. He is different from Nwaka, his rival, who is located only in native space and is therefore ideologically rigid. On the British side, Clarke, Winterbottom and Dr. Mary Savage espouse colonial dogma because they too are located in traditional space, albeit a European one that prefers hegemony

over 'other' spaces. Erosion of authority and rivalry in the domestic sphere (Ezeulu's household) parallel disharmony and competition in the public domain (Umuaro and its six villages). Igbo society, as portrayed in the novel, is a macrocosm of the extended family, so tribal and familial structures undergo a similar struggle to resist foreign influences. A similar example is Muthoni, in The River Between; she is a Christian, but she also supports female circumcision. Gikuyu society in The River Between, the combined ridges of Kameno and Makuyu, is also threatened by outside forces and experiences turmoil in the public and domestic spheres. For example, the Kiama, the legislative and cultural arm of the tribe, is plagued by factionism (the Kabonyi-Waiyaki rivalry for leadership) and Joshua's household (the zealous leader of the Christian converts) is mired in rebellion by his two daughters. R.N. Egudu's article, "African Literature and Social Problems," sees many similarities between The River Between and Arrow of God chief among which is the "motif of receiving education from the whites for the purpose of self-preservation" that Waiyaki and Oduche symbolize respectively (430). Egudu also believes that Christianity destroyed African traditional values during the colonial era, and he implicitly commends Anglophone authors for stressing and criticizing this historical practice. He cites, as one example, Christianity's denigration of circumcision in The River Between, a practice that "binds the people firmly into a harmonious cultural group in East Africa" (Egudu 429). Egudu likes Ngugi's ironic treatment of Waiyaki who "got well-educated ... and found something good in white man's education and religion," but who also "became a victim of divided allegiance" to tribal customs and Westernization (430). Egudu correctly points out that it is ironic for Waiyaki, who underwent circumcision as a young boy, to fall in love with uncircumcised

Nyambura. In Egudu's view, it is a "culturally illegitimate love" and no amount of theorizing and rationalizing on Waiyaki's part can erase the fact that, as "preserver designate of the people's culture (by having taken the loyalty oath), he has taken the lead in the destruction of that culture" (431). Thus, The River Between and Arrow of God have common sites of ideological resistance, namely the tribe and family where varied ideologies collide (Christianity, Western education, circumcision). In both texts, otherness encompasses exoticism and cultural specificity, Gikuyu and Igbo on one hand and British on the other. Hybridity is manifested in the attempts by the major characters to straddle dissimilar cultures, which inevitably undermine their native selves.

OTHERNESS IN TRIBAL SOCIETY

Alterity and hybridity, in The River Between, operate on two axes: culture and ideology. Alterity exists entirely in Gikuyu tribal structure, in its fissures, by virtue of the geographical fact that there are two ridges, Kameno and Makuyu, separated by Honia river. This means each is an 'other' from the other's perspective. Difference, in The River Between, is manifested in intra-tribal rivalries, confrontations between tribe and missionaries, Kabonyi and Waiyaki. Kabonyi, a cultural purist, is tainted by his earlier involvement with Christianity, as Joshua's assistant. Kabonyi represents double transcendence, crossing over twice from traditional religion to Christianity, and vice versa. Waiyaki always appeals to the optimistic instincts of the Gikuyu, while Kabonyi exploits their fears:

> He [Kabonyi] reminded them of the poverty of the land. The dry months had left the people with nothing to eat. And the expected harvest would

> not yield much. He touched on the land taken by the white man. He talked of the new taxes being imposed on the people by the Government Post now in their midst. And instead of Waiyaki leading people against these more immediate ills, he was talking of more buildings. Were people going to be burdened with more buildings? With more teachers? And was the white man's education really necessary? (95)

Kabonyi claims to be the champion of the purity of Gikuyu identity but the irony is that, as a former follower of Joshua's, Kabonyi himself facilitates "impurity" (i.e. alien ideology) in the tribe. From Kabonyi's perspective, Waiyaki embodies the historical failure of Kameno leadership on the ridges. Their rivalry is a "continuation of that struggle that had always existed between Makuyu and Kameno" (144).

Kabonyi fails to realize that the Gikuyu, inexorably, are marching toward progress, that Christianity and education are "forces awakened in the people", and that "the ridges no longer desired their isolation" (144). In addition, alterity occurs within the framework of an ideological contest between Gikuyu religion and Christianity, Kiama versus the church; Kabonyi and his followers versus Joshua and the Christian converts; tribal circumcision versus Christian conversion. It is also symbolized in the delineation of the major characters. Thus, Waiyaki is a traitor, from Kabonyi's perspective; while Waiyaki views Kabonyi as representing the past, he (Waiyaki) sees himself as a symbol of modernism and progressive ideology. Siriana/Marioshoni schools are binary oppositional structures, and so are the Gikuyu/British (within a framework of the racialization of culture) and sister rivals, Nyambura/Muthoni (in contexts of parental loyalty/disloyalty; resignation/liberation to and from Christian theology). Nyambura and Muthoni also represent inaction/action; timidity/rebellion and female docility/female emancipation, respectively.

All the major characters' selves are undermined. For example, Waiyaki straddles two cultures and embraces two antithetical ideologies, Gikuyu and Western. Kabonyi is a former Christian convert turned champion of native culture and radical member of the Kiama and Chege, Waiyaki's father, is both a traditionalist and futurist who tolerates Westernization. Nyambura is caught between love for Waiyaki and parental loyalty, while her sister Muthoni is full of duplicity, because of her desire to be of the tribe (by being circumcised) and, simultaneously, remain a Christian. Their father Joshua, is a Christian leader, but he supports the tribal practice of loyalty-oaths. These characters' perspectives, or sociolects are in a dialogic relationship. There are conflicts among Gikuyu voices; the collective voice of the Kiama conflicts with the individual voices of its prominent members: Waiyaki, Kabonyi and his son, Kamau, vis a vis what course of action the tribe ought to pursue, in its dealings with Christianity and the white man. These voices are subsumed by the monologic, authorial voice of the third-person narrative. Ngugi is the mouthpiece for Waiyaki, Kabonyi, Kamau, Joshua, Nyambura and Muthoni because he is their surrogate who omnisciently presents their individual perspectives. These characters speak indirectly to the reader, whose reader-response voice, per se, is markedly different from theirs and Ngugi's (because of the implications of cultural specificity). More likely, an African reader (Gikuyu or not) and Ngugi inhabit a similar chronotope (colonization) that is different from one inhabited by a European reader (colonial hegemony). If so, it means that a Western reader could easily dismiss the novel as a Marxist critique of colonialism, rather than construe it as dialogic praxis of otherness and hybridity. Each character competes for the reader's ear, in an attempt to project a world that is different from the others' portraits.

In Ngugi's novel, members of the Gikuyu tribe collectively constitute an 'other' in relation to the British missionaries and their Christian converts. Tribal ancestors (such as Demi na Mathathi), physically and spiritually strong, adhered strictly to Gikuyu customs, including the widespread practice of circumcision which was, and is, the most important ritual and step to adulthood. The spirits of the ancestors and the living are invoked during circumcision:

> ...It kept people together, bound the tribe. It was at the core of the social structure, and a something that gave meaning to a man's life. End the custom and the spiritual basis of the tribe's cohesion and integration would be no more. The cry was up. Gikuyu Karinga. Keep the tribe pure. Tutikwenda Irigu. It was a soul's cry, a soul's wish (68).

In other words, from Gikuyu perspective, getting rid of circumcision is tantamount to cultural death. It is the "core of the social structure", the ontologizing ingredient of Gikuyu alterity and, despite their embrace of Westernization, they adamantly refuse to discard tribal customs. Circumcision is one way to "rid the land of all impurities" (121). Thus, uncircumcised girls like Nyambura are "Irigu", dirty and responsible for the wrath of ancestral spirits heaped on the land. Chege's daughters (Waiyaki's sisters) are circumcised, and it would be impossible for any Gikuyu girl to marry without first having gone through it. Before the whiteman set foot on their land, Gikuyus even brewed their own beer, women ruled men and owned property, but colonialism reversed gender roles. Honia, "the" river between Kameno and Makuyu separates Gikuyu conservatives from Christian progressives. It is the life-blood of the ridges, with waters traditionally used as anaesthetic by young boys and girls about to be circumcised. Waiyaki uses education as "a surrogate for Honia's unifying and curative function" (Sekyi-Otu 171). Edward Said

rightly observes, in Culture and Imperialism, that Ngugi "redoes 'Heart of Darkness' by inducing life into Conrad's river". Gone are Conrad's "images of river exploration and mysterious setting ... the white man recedes in importance – he is compressed into a single missionary figure emblematically called Livingstone – although his influence is felt in the divisions that separate the villages, the riverbanks, and the people from one another ... A new pattern, suppressed in 'Heart of Darkness', appears, out of which Ngugi generates a new mythos, whose tenuous course and final obscurity suggest a return to an African Africa" (211).

In Gikuyu folklore, Gikuyu and Mumbi, father and mother of the tribe, had nine daughters who also bore lots of children; these became the immediate ancestors of the tribe. The tribe even had its own prophet, Mugo wa Kibiro, who foresaw the advent of Europeans (called "butterflies" because of their ubiquitous presence). Mugo counseled his people to tolerate and trap the white man, not destroy him. Incidentally, Ezeulu in Arrow of God suggests a similar accommodation of Westernization. Life on Kameno and Makuyu, in pre-colonial days, was peaceful and pastoral:

> ... Nothing moved on the huge cattle road that wound through the forest towards Kameno. The yellowish streaks of morning light diffused through the forest, producing long shadows on the cattle path. The insects in the forest kept up an incessant sound which mingled with the noise of falling water farther down the valley (The River Between 25).

The inhabitants of Kameno blame Joshua for the white man's coming, and the rumors of prospective British administration and imposition of taxes. Harvests are occasions for joy, unity and sacrifice among the people of the ridges. Particularly pleasing are good harvests, which inevitably and habitually remind them of the great famine that occurred prior to British colonialism. The symbolism of this famine is the death of native culture

and disunity among those who lived to see Christianity's encroachment. On a personal plain, Chege's first two wives also died during this famine.

Metaphorically, Honia river is the only stable tribal structure in the novel. The hill country is divided – Christians reside in Makuyu, while traditionalists and purists inhabit Kameno. The symbolism of the architecture of Makuyu's houses mirrors the disharmony that Christianity has brought:

> ...There was a general uniformity between all the houses that lay scattered over this ridge. They consisted of round thatched huts standing in groups of three or four. A natural hedge surrounded each household. Joshua's house was different. His was a tin-roofed rectangular building standing quite distinctly by itself on the ridge. The tin roof was already decaying and let in rain freely, so on top of the roof could be seen little scraps of sacking that covered the very bad parts. The building, standing so distinctly and defiantly, was perhaps an indication that the old isolation of Makuyu from the rest of the world was being broken down (28).

As this passage infers, thatched edifices are native structures juxtaposed with a different, modern structure. Joshua's "decaying" roof and defiant house signify dissension in his household, the future rebellion of his daughters over circumcision and love. These fissures in tribal structure generate two basic ideological conflicts between tradition and modernity, custom and Westernization. Urban centers are distant from the hill country, the closest being Siriana, the residence of Livingstone who is the head of the missionaries.

Land is very important to the Gikuyu and according to James Ogude's Ngugi's Novels and African History, it is a metaphor for native identity:

> Ngugi's earlier texts bear that powerful evocation of land, both as a signifier of a glorious past in which man and woman were in harmony with nature and thereby presupposing a stable identity associated with landownership, and land as a signifier of loss whose recovery would imply the recovery of identity (46).

Colonialism's usurpation of the land is tantamount to a disruption of identity because land is transformed into a chronotope, a "space for cultural and political contestation" (47). The hero of Kenya's independence, Jomo Kenyatta, in his autobiography, Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu, also emphasizes the importance of land in Gikuyu culture. Land, he says, is inextricably linked to Gikuyu identity and "when the European comes to the Gikuyu country and robs the people of their lands, he is taking away not only their livelihood, but the material symbol that holds family and tribe together. In doing this he gives one blow which cuts away the foundation from the whole of Gikuyu life, social, moral and economic" (22). Land is a site for the struggle between two different cultural specifities, Kenyan and English. From tribal perspective, there is no difference between British administrators and missionaries, nor is there any between education and religion. Administrators and missionaries are perceived as settlers, despite the good intentions of their so-called 'civilizing mission'. Like the rain, they are a blessing and a curse; the rain ends famine, but it also erodes the soil "stealing the land" (The River Between 65). Colonialism is a displacement of Gikuyu space and, even though it perpetuates dissension in the ridges, the Gikuyu do not consider fellow tribesmen and women of Kameno and Makuyu as culturally distinct. With its lofty goal of civilizing the natives on one hand, colonialism destroys their identity, on the other. In other words, it is a moment of hybridization. Education, the white man's "secret magic and power" (68) and Christianity, are ideological tools in the service of hegemony.

In pre-colonial times, the harvest season ("Njahi") was a happy, communal occasion that signified social cohesion and shared responsibilities:

> ...It was the favourite season with all the people. For then, everyone would be sure of a good harvest. The peas and beans, bursting into life,

> gave colour and youth to the land ... Women sang gay songs. The children too ... You could tell by the bright faces of the women that they were happy.
>
> Not only the women but cows and goats caught the life. They jumped about, kicking in the air with their tails twisted into different shapes. The children were also happy and ones who were grown up looked after the very young ones. You would see them running about, wandering aimlessly as if the madness or the intoxication of the bees had caught them (79).

Now that foreigners have settled Gikuyu land everything, including nature, has changed:

> ... the pattern of seasons was broken. It no longer rained regularly. The sun seemed to shine for months and the grain dried. And when it fell, the rainwater carried away the soil. The soil no longer answered the call and prayers of the people. Perhaps it had to do with the white men and the blaspheming men of Makuyu (80).

Can this passage not be construed as a climatological illustration of alterity, an 'other' unfamiliar weather that displaces a familiar one? It definitely should.

In The River Between, the interaction of whites and Gikuyu is oppositional, an intersubjective relation of transcendence, indirect apprehension and outside consciousness that involves superiority. For example, Christians in Siriana see Muthoni's death as one more proof that the Gikuyu are barbarians. The head of the missionaries, Livingstone, though fluent in the Gikuyu language, relies on a few of the natives (e.g. Joshua and Kabonyi) to spread Christianity on the hill country:

> When he came to the Mission, he was full of vigour and certainly full of great expectations. He always looked to a time when his efforts would produce fruits. But as years went on he realized that he was not making as much progress as he had expected he would. This was a disappointment to a man who had left home for a wild country, fired by a dream of heroism and the vision of many new souls won for Christ through his own efforts. His call and his mission had not met with the response he had once hoped for. True, the school and the hospital had expanded a great deal. But these people seemed only interested in education, while they paid lip service to salvation (55).

From a transcendental aesthetic point of view, this passage proves that Livingstone's knowledge of the natives is based on 'a priori' elements, because he hates visiting the ridges, inspite of the fact that he has lived in the country for twenty-five years. In a Bakhtinian sense, Livingstone uses the chronotope of race as an 'a priori' means of perception. Though an idealist, he is also a religious purist totally opposed to circumcision. Earlier in his career he was tolerant, but when he failed to wipe it out he became intolerant. Now, he relies on Joshua and Kabonyi, as he shifts from moderation to aggression. Muthoni's death is the catalyst in this shift, especially when Martha (a religious zealot and one of his critics) informs him that Muthoni was Joshua's daughter. To some, including Waiyaki, Christianity exacerbates the rift that already exists between Kameno and Makuyu.

Waiyaki, the central character is a symbol of mediation, the only one who is not perceived as a stranger because both camps accept him – Christians in Makuyu, and traditionalists in Kameno. He is not a polarizing figure, and he is one of the characters that favor peaceful coexistence. The other is Muthoni. From his childhood days when he used to play with other children from Koina, Waiyaki was inspired to "be born again", to immerse himself in tradition. Back then he was proud and eager to identify with "Demi" and Gikuyu tradition. Those were the days of tribal glory, an era "evoked by Ngugi as a challenge and at times a parallel to the present state of chaos" (Ogude 46). It was a period of conformity to Gikuyu orthodoxy, when young Waiyaki subscribed to a conservative ideology. As an adult, after his education at Siriana, he abandons conservatism to embrace a new ideology that fuses nativism and modernism, as he embarks on a mission of reconciliation. Waiyaki sees himself as a mediator because he

believes disunity, on the ridges, would be detrimental to his educational plans. He may be viewed by young Kenyans in the novel, as well as in real life, as a model for leadership, but "his story serves even more forcefully as a warning. Leadership must not become distanced from the throng. United action presupposes the mustering of a corporate will, not the mass following of a self-ordained saviour" (Cook and Okenimpke 27). The novel "poses questions which remain urgently relevant today as to what form of education is desirable in Africa – or elsewhere. It depicts a situation in which a properly unified programme for defending the integrity of indigenous society is dangerously split between rival policies" (27).

Waiyaki endures a curse of leadership; his is a life of longing, dissatisfaction and selflessness. No wonder he is tempted, sometimes, to give it all up and liberate himself:

> ... Suddenly he thought he knew what he wanted. Freedom. He wanted to run, run hard, run anywhere. Or hover aimlessly, wandering everywhere like a spirit. Then he would have everything – every flower, every tree – or he could fly to the moon (The River Between 73).

However, his liberation would have the unintended consequence of replacing reconciliation with Kabonyi's volatile form of resistance. That would be an act of betrayal, coming from a person that others consider a trailblazer. Losing Waiyaki would be the equivalent of waking up and finding that Honia river has disappeared. He has a unique status and a symbolic role:

> In metaphorical terms Waiyaki himself believes that he must become the "river between" the two opposing ridges, a conviction which becomes an explicitly messianic vocation for him. On the theoretical level the novel is a symbolic mediation upon the historical conflicts of Gikuyu society, seeking to resolve these conflicts by embodying them within its "inner form" or generic structure ... It is therefore important to clarify the ideological implications of the generic choices made by Ngugi, especially in regard to the character Waiyaki's messianic status.

> ... As the alienated and "homeless" hero of 'The River Between', Waiyaki seeks to combat the fragmentary nature of social reality by messianically interiorizing these fragmentations within himself (Wise 45).

Substitute 'alterities' for "fragmentations", 'Kameno/Makuyu' for "social reality" and 'hybridizing' for "interiorizing" in the quoted passage, and it could very well be supporting my thesis that hybridity, in The River Between, negates otherness. In addition, it seems to be echoing Homi Bhabha's view, in The Location of Culture, that identity is constituted in difference, "the representation of the subject in the differentiating order of otherness" (45). In Waiyaki's case, the alterity within his identity creates a colonial desire to displace the 'other', the white man, by using Western education, "the white man's magic" (The River Between) to create a position of privilege for himself in society. Waiyaki is a "homeless" hero living an "unhomely life". The modern world, including fictional Gikuyu society is, according to Bhabha, "unhomely", replete with extra-territorial conditions and cross-cultural initiations, and hybridity is the difference "within" a subject that resides in an "in-between" reality (The Location of Culture). Space and time, psychology and sociology, Bhabha further theorizes, develop an "interstitial" relationship that threatens alterity or binary oppositions. The paramount implication of Bhabha's theory, for the main character of The River Between, is that Waiyaki is a postcolonial subject (despite the novel's setting in a colonial era), a mimic person aping Western mores and pre-colonial, primitive (because untainted) virtues of communality and respect for Gikuyu elders and the Kiama. His cultural hybridity mediates the liminal spaces that are occupied by differences in his society. He takes Livingstone's advice to leave tribal politics alone and concentrate on education. So, Waiyaki reluctantly participates in the affairs of the Kiama. The novel "has some

significance for a discussion of the fiction about 'Mau Mau'. In the first place, the 'Kiama', the group dedicated to the overthrow of the white man and the purity of the tribe ... can be seen ... to bear a significant resemblance to 'Mau Mau' or, at any rate, to 'Mau Mau' as seen through the eyes of those less than wholehearted in their support of the movement ... Moreover ... Waiyaki's relationship to the 'Kiama' is marked by ambivalences that recall Kenyatta's [Jomo Kenyatta, first President of Kenya after it gained independence] own edginess about 'Mau Mau'" (Maughan – Brown 232).

Waiyaki envisions more trouble on the ridges because of the Christians' intransigence and the tribe's stubborn adherence to custom. The first tribal school for Gikuyu pupils that he and the tribe build, Marioshoni, symbolizes native desire to temper British culture and foreign ideology with Gikuyu practices and ideas. It also testifies to Waiyaki's resolve to be of service to his own people:

> ... In starting self-help in education, Waiyaki had seen it as a kind of mission. It was a vision which he followed with hope and passion. He travelled from ridge to ridge, all over the country of the sleeping lions. He found a willing people. Yes, the ridges were beginning to awake. The trees, the birds and the paths he trod, all knew him, knew a man destined to serve his country (The River Between 67).

Marioshoni also represents a stage in the pivotal struggle taking place on Kameno and Makuyu. Once, on a visit to Joshua's church, Waiyaki is disturbed to hear him condemn "those who had found the light yet now walked not in the light ... those who wanted to walk their feet on two roads at the same time" (86), a subtle attack on cultural hybridization. Waiyaki's ambition is to make Western education accessible to the Gikuyu, and use it to help weaken British superiority:

> ... With the little knowledge that he had he would uplift the tribe, yes, give it the white man's learning and his tools, so that in the end the tribe would be strong enough, wise enough, to chase away the settlers and the

> missionaries. And Waiyaki saw a tribe great with many educated sons and daughters, all living together, tilling the land of their ancestors in perpetual serenity, pursuing their rituals and beautiful customs and all of them acknowledging their debt to him (87).

It is ironic that the Gikuyu should view Marioshoni as "the symbol of their defiance of foreign ways" (92), since one of its goals is to Christianize the natives. This would defeat traditional religion, and inadvertently disrupt their identity:

> Their children could speak a foreign language, could actually read and write. And this had been done in spite of Siriana's stern action in refusing to admit the children of those who would not abandon the ancient rites (92).

Siriana and Marioshoni are dialectical structures of sameness and difference – the former Western, the latter Kenyan, both having similar objectives. The voices of Waiyaki's pupils praising the virtues of Western education betray a double-voicedness that is the hallmark of dialogism:

> Father, mother
> Provide me with pen and slate
> I want to learn.
> Land is gone
> Cattle and sheep are not there
> Not there any more
> What's left?
> Learning, learning.
>
> Father, if you had many cattle and sheep
> I would ask for a spear and shield,
> But now –
> I do not want a spear
> I do not want a shield
> I want the shield and spear of learning.
>
> Father,
> The war of shields and spears
> Is now ended
> What is left?
> The battle of the mind.
> I, we, all want to learn (93-94).

There is no dialogue or interchange of utterance in this song but, as a particular instance of language and novelistic dialogism, it has two separate voices that blend the intentions of the speakers (singers) and the two listeners (first, the parents, "Father and mother", and second, the reader) and Ngugi's authorial voice within it. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism is highly debatable, especially since he himself was ambiguous about it, as to whether or not it concerns a variety of utterances or styles relating to each other, or a relationship between multiple intentions. Suffice it to say that the song can be construed as an attempt to fuse two social contexts, one Gikuyu (ruralism), the other Western (modernism) and make them interact with the historical reality of colonialism. The intentions of the parents are mixed – on one hand, they prefer their offspring to live in the agrarian society they themselves are accustomed to and, on the other, realize that times have changed and would not want to frustrate their children's colonial desires. Hence the juxtaposition of the vocabulary of war (resistance to hegemony) with that of education, appropriation of Western ideology: "spear of learning", "battle of the mind", a classic example of antagonistic double-voicedness.

Similarly, the intention of the younger generation, represented by the song, is conflicted. The pupils embrace Western education, but they do so reluctantly ("Cattle and sheep are not there/Not there any more") because colonialism has had the negative effect of diluting their identity, their sense of Gikuyu self, which has always been inextricably linked to the land:

> One of the ways in which Ngugi achieves his anti-imperialist nationalism is to give a voice to hitherto repressed voices of the colonial subject and to compress the colonizer's voice into some isolated figures within a sociopolitical landscape saturated by the native. In 'The River Between' the conflict is essentially about creating a new mythos for the community

> and at the heart of this struggle it is the privileged voice of the Africans, with their tensions and contradictions, that is heard. As one of the more influential thinkers of Kenyan nationalism, Ngugi responds to the problems of using history in the reconstruction of national identity through modes that highlight the tensions between the constructions of tradition and the implicit modernity of the nascent Kenyan nation (Ogude 50).

The pupils, like their parents, are symbols of hybridity and the song's double-wordedness attests to the fact that they too, like their teacher Waiyaki, are trapped in-between two chronotopes namely, nativism and colonialism. Ato Sekyi-Otu, in "The Refusal of Agency: The Founding Narrative and Waiyaki's Tragedy in 'The River Between'," rightfully accuses Waiyaki of political apathy, naivety and shortsightedness, that he is:

> Unable to perceive the contradiction of Siriana mission and his new attitude toward it as a symptomatic contradiction whose deeper roots are to be found in the power relations of the colonial situation – power relations which, intimately connected with the politics of land alienation, determine the character and goals of educational practices, the entire sphere of intellectual and cultural production ... Taking refuge in the nihilism of received knowledge and the technocratic solution, Waiyaki suppresses attention to political questions, to the whole universe of political experience ... (170).

Gikuyu youths are symbolically associated with modernism while their elders are allied with tradition, a generational struggle that mirrors the rivalry between Waiyaki and Kabonyi – the former is supported by the young, the later by the old. Thus, there is so much tension, hybridity faces a daunting task.

DISCORD IN DOMESTICITY

James Ogude, in his book Ngugi's Novels and African History: Narrating the Nation, suggests that Ngugi's early novels, including The River Between, seek to "reconcile the apparent contradiction between ethnicity and nationalism," and that "the portrayal of the tribe as an organic whole and Ngugi's gesture towards a reconciled nationhood are mediated by women" (109-110). I agree because, in The River Between, Nyambura, Muthoni and Miriamu are, in my view, symbolic mollifiers of male intransigence and tribal rigidity. The sisters Nyambura and Muthoni represent division and fusion on the same site, their Christian parents' household. Nyambura views circumcision as sinful, a "pagan rite," because she is a fervent Christian. Muthoni is not. Muthoni shocks her sister when she informs Nyambura of her intention to be circumcised. Muthoni loves Gikuyu customs and wants to be initiated into womanhood, through circumcision, the same way Waiyaki was initiated into manhood. "Womanhood here acts as the buffer zone for ethnicity and the implied 'fixed' identity of the tribe which is crystallized in female circumcision" (Ogude 110). She is Waiyaki's soul mate because they share a similar philosophy of peaceful coexistence:

> ... 'Father and mother are circumcised. Are they not Christians? Circumcision did not prevent them from being Christians. I too have embraced the white man's faith. However, I know it is beautiful, oh so beautiful to be initiated into womanhood. You learn the ways of the tribe. Yes, the white man's God does not quite satisfy me. I want, I need something more. My life and your life are here, in the hills, that you and I know' (The River Between 26).

What the last sentence of this passage really means is that Muthoni is reminding her sister that, as residents of Makuyu, they are inextricably and unquestionably linked to Gikuyu culture, even though Makuyu is the hotbed of Christianity. Only two characters in the novel are hybridized completely, and both die because of it – Waiyaki and Muthoni.

Their death is a symbolic indictment, by Ngugi, of cultural hybridity. It signals his support for hermetic identity, the undesirability of a self (especially a Gikuyu one) relocating from its native space. Muthoni stubbornly decides on secret circumcision and stays with her aunt at Kameno. Joshua, on learning about her plans, threatens to disown her and, when she refuses to abandon them, stops acknowledging her as his daughter:

> All right. Let her go back to Egypt. Yes. Let her go back. He, Joshua, would travel, on, on to the new Jerusalem (36).

As this utterance demonstrates, Joshua's action metaphorically transforms Muthoni into an 'other', places her in a chronotope of regress (Gikuyu history and custom metamorphosed into ancient Egypt), with the analogical aid of Old Testament Biblical history of some Israelites returning to bondage under the Pharoah, preferring Egypt's hedonistic practices to Jehovah's laws. Some see Muthoni's rebellion as Joshua's trick to secretly appease Gikuyu gods of the hills. If so, they are not surprised since they believe that Joshua is a religious hypocrite who privately consumes beer. Muthoni's initiation, like all Gikuyu circumcision ceremonies, is an exercise in eroticism, what with all the emotional frenzy, love songs and sexual gyrations. In the words of the novel, it is "chaos created by locked emotions let loose", a "mad intoxication of ecstasy and pleasure" (42). Even Waiyaki is swept up by it as he dances with her uninhibitedly, action that he later regrets and reconsiders as exposure, a psychological nakedness in front of the tribe. As they dance, Muthoni confesses her real motives for defying her father:

> 'I want to be a woman. Father and Mother are circumcised. But why are they stopping me, why do they deny me this? How could I be outside the tribe, when all the girls born with me at the same time have left me? ... I want to be a woman made beautiful in the tribe... I want to be a woman made beautiful in the manner of the tribe' (44).

As Muthoni's speech shows, by using 'other' Gikuyu girls as a spring board, her own identity becomes a subjectivity in crisis. She will not become like the others without circumcision. Circumcision will make possible an interhuman, inter-Gikuyu relation with other girls on the hill country; it (circumcision) is transcendence that will enable Muthoni to go out from one imposed Christian self and confront an 'other' native self. It is all a matter of exteriority, as a Western identity faces a Gikuyu one that is difficult to resist. Thus, Muthoni is a hybrid character, a site for two identities to coalesce or, as Bhabha would say, a "repetition of 'partial presence'." She wants to use circumcision to cross over from a circumscribed chronotope to a more desirable one. Hers is a colonial desire "metamorphosed into an attitude of openness to exteriority. Openness that is appeal and response to the other. The proximity of the other [circumcised Gikuyu girls], origin of all putting into question of self" (Levinas 99). Muthoni, in this respect, is a site for what Bhabha calls "alterity of identity" or "sameness-in-difference" (The Location of Culture 54).

The Gikuyu have no quarrel with alterity "per se". Otherness, for them, is a matter of perspective, and it is natural for British and Kenyan subjects to be culturally different. What they object to is transcendent alterity, a crossing over by one identity to another, an intersubjective relation between varied alterities. This, in other words, would be an attempt at hybridization. What Waiyaki views as reconciliation the tribe considers creolization, meaning that Westernization bastardizes Gikuyu identity. The Gikuyu call it "impure"; those who advocate it must be "cleansed", and in Waiyaki's case the ultimate cleansing imposed by the Kiama, at his trial, is a sentence of death (which the novel implies). Ironically, in Muthoni's case, circumcision, the agent of transcendence,

is what causes her illness and subsequent death. Metaphorically, circumcision was never meant to be a tool for crossing over from one identity to another. The Gikuyu always intended it as a spiritual link to the tribe, a reaffirmation of original native identity, a strengthening of tribal roots. They consider it treasonous to dilute their identity with a different one (Western), despite one's good intentions. Waiyaki's crime is that his attempts to make differences coexist – Gikuyu and British, Christian and non-Christian, circumcised and uncircumcised – have the unintended consequence of endangering their culture. In other words, reconciliation threatens the ipseity of one alterity, and puts it in question by another. The result is confusion, not fusion.

Joshua, one of the early converts to Christianity, fears revenge from his tribe for embracing the white man's religion. He views tribal members as backward pagans, forever wallowing in "dirt and mud" (The River Between 29). He prefers Christian prophets such as Isaiah to Gikuyu seers like Mugo wa Kibiro. Joshua's baptism was an occasion that brought him inner peace and rejuvenation. For him, tribal ways mean turmoil, but the white man's religion guarantees tranquility. Therefore it is not surprising that, to a majority of Gikuyu tribesmen and women, Joshua is an 'other', a cultural outcast. He is a fundamentalist believer in the Old Testament and a comprador who often prays for colonialism to succeed. Ironically, his wife Miriamu was already circumcised when he married her but, back then, this fervent opponent of circumcision composed a prayer to excuse what he viewed as a lapse:

> God, you know it was not my fault. God, I could not do otherwise, and she did this while she was in Egypt (31).

This prayer equates the Biblical bondage of Israelites in Egypt, under the Pharoah, with female entrapment of a devout Christian, by a paganistic Gikuyu. Joshua blames fellow

tribesmen for their suffering, not the white man, and he never permits his daughters to stay out late, especially during circumcision season. He fears that the initiation songs may "contaminate" them. Miriamu is a supportive, non-liberated wife. Christianity is an acquired faith for her because, deep down, she is a traditional Gikuyu who "had learnt the value of Christian submission" (34). In conclusion, readers of The River Between engage vicariously with Waiyaki in a "historical process by which the human body itself is composed as a 'self' in the midst of a spatial and temporal world" (Wise 37). The novel is Hegelian due to the fact that it is a "bourgeois epic" that is centered on Waiyaki's social formation, and he has the burden of creating an 'other' society, a new one, out of his own experiences (36). Wise's conclusion is that the novel is a cultural document in which Ngugi criticizes the Christian West for attempting to eradicate not only circumcision, but also Gikuyu identity. Wise could very well be referring to Arrow of God as well which, in my view, is also a cultural document that indicts British interference in native practices.

Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God, the sequel to his first novel about colonialism, Things Fall Apart, has the same chronotopes (tribe, history, the present) as Ngugi's The River Between. The main difference between the two is in the realm of cultural specificity (Igbo and Gikuyu respectively). Both have structures of ideology that collide, and Arrow of God depicts tradition in a similar conflictual relationship with British colonialism and Christianity, pantheism locking horns with Western monotheism. Achebe's novel, like Ngugi's, is about resistance to Christianity and colonization. Igbo structures either subvert, appropriate or dismantle Westernization, in a dialogic relationship. Ezeulu, as Chief Priest of Ulu, is located in pre-colonial space and is

expected to protect Umuaro's custom from foreign contamination, but he relocates his son, Oduche, in colonial space by encouraging him to embrace Christianity. Three things influenced Achebe to write Arrow of God, according to Robert Wren: (a) the "Nigeriansation of the intellectual community" to which Achebe belonged on the eve of Nigeria's independence, which fostered a reconstruction of African history, (b) his "awakened and modified sense of the past ... from sources forgotten: his mother's stories, conversations in households more traditional than his own, histories of paternal and maternal relatives, ancestral legends, reports of lawsuits and land disputes, talk of and in the mission hospital near his home, ... and (c) Joyce Cary's Mister Johnson, a fictional text written by an English man, that portrays Nigerians as corrupt, obsequious and uncivilized, which "motivated [Achebe] to tell 'the story that we had to tell'" (76-77).

Arrow of God, in my view, exhibits a pattern of dialogic and self-reflexive structures and deals with the theme of traditionalism versus modernism, of colonized Igbos re-evaluating themselves, while reacting to the British at the same time. For example, the tribe has always been fragmented, but the presence of British missionaries and administrators enhances existing conflicts. Achebe "starts the narrative in medias res, dipping back from time to time into the past for the historical material with which he impregnates the narrative present. From these brief but significant flashes back into the past, we build up a picture of the pre-colonial society with which the colonial present is contrasted" (Obiechina, Culture 238). Briefly, the novel is about otherness, the conflict between colonialism and a traditional society in Eastern Nigeria circa 1920. It fictionalizes Igbo community, Umuaro, and depicts it as a confederation of six villages.

Each has a god, but Ulu is the common, supreme deity. British administrators, stationed in Okperi, have jurisdiction over all of Umuaro. Colonial authority is vested in Captain Winterbottom and his deputy, Tony Clarke. Other major characters are: Ezeulu, chief priest of Ulu; Nwaka, Ezeulu's rival; Obika and Oduche, two of Ezeulu's four sons; Ulu and his chief rival, Idemili; and Ezidemili, chief priest of Idemili. John Goodcountry is the Christian missionary in Umuaro; his assistant is Moses Unachukwu, an Igbo. When the story begins, Umuaro is about to wage war on Okperi over disputed land, and also to avenge the death of Akukalia, Umuaro's ambassador to Okperi. Ezeulu opposes the war, while Nwaka supports it. The colonial authorities use it as a pretext to consolidate British rule in the area. The war is a significant event, because it proves the existence of differences prior to colonialism. However, Arrow of God's plot focuses on Ezeulu's duties as Ulu's chief priest, his friendship with Winterbottom, and his refusal to grant the tribe's request and name a specific day for the New Yam festival. There are five sub-plots:

(a) the struggle between Ulu and Idemili, for religious supremacy

(b) the controversy over Oduche's conversion to Christianity

(c) the personal animosity between Ezeulu and Nwaka

(d) The religious and political battle between Ezeulu and Ezidemili, priest of Idemili, and

(e) Ezeulu's imprisonment for refusing the British administration's offer to make him Paramount Chief.

Emmanuel Obiechina correctly sees Arrow of God as an allegory about various forms of difference: (a) Westernization (British authority as represented by Winterbottom) (b)

native authority (symbolized by Ezeulu and the clan) (c) personal authority (Ezeulu's role as an "arrow" of God), and (d) old versus new order. "The contact situation exacerbates the conflicts and radicalizes the incipient oppositions and contradictions within the native tradition. Where this shows most emphatically is in the breakdown of the sense of solidarity among the traditionalists. Ezeulu ... whose role marks him out as keeper of collective security, is the person who feels most keenly this breakdown, and he never tires of attributing the change, deprecatingly, to 'the new age'" ("The Human Dimension of History" 171). Ezeulu is like Waiyaki, in my view, because "a good deal of the action [in Arrow of God] is concerned with the attempt by the chief character to build a bridge over the widening chasm" (Obiechina 179).

Achebe's novel also examines the interaction between various clans (intra-tribal alterities) and the tensions between them. Specifically, the story is about Ezeulu, Chief Priest of Ulu, his struggle to maintain his authority among the different clans of Umuaro, and his dealings with the British administration epitomized by his friend Captain Winterbottom and his deputy, Tony Clarke. Ezeulu wants to prevent dissension among his own family, and confront the threat that colonialism and Christianity pose to the cohesion of traditional domestic structure. He has permitted his son Oduche to become a convert to Christianity, which signals an ambivalent relationship with the British:

> ... His mind turned from the festival to the new religion. He was not sure what to make of it. At first he had thought that since the white man had come with great power and conquest it was necessary that some people should learn the ways of his own deity. That was why he had agreed to send his son, Oduche, to learn the new ritual. He also wanted him to learn the white man's wisdom, for Ezeulu knew from what he saw of Wintabota and the stories he heard about his people that the white man was very nice ... But what would happen if, as many oracles prophesied, the white man had come to take over the land and rule? In such a case it would be wise to have a man of your family in his band (Arrow of God 46-47).

It is clear from this passage that Ezeulu, in his desire to accommodate Westernization, risks being perceived as an 'other' by his own people, an accomplice in foreign efforts to erase Igbo cultural identity. Emmanuel Obiechina correctly points to Achebe's ironic treatment of Ezeulu who, as symbolic head of Umuaro "should be the rallying point of resistance to the colonial authority" but, instead, is "unwittingly an instrument of subversion of the traditional system" (Culture 239). Ambivalence is precisely the chief cause of his troubles with his fellow elders, especially Nwaka. Nwaka is Ezeulu's rival, an orator who always opposes Ezeulu's views at tribal meetings; Nwaka is baffled by his opponent's cozy relationship with Winterbottom. When Winterbottom offers him the office of Warrant Chief, Ezeulu turns it down, but his refusal does not succeed in alleviating the suspicions of the elders. From the perspective of British authorities, Ezeulu's refusal is an affront that must be punished, before it weakens their political hold on Igbo land. Consequently, Ezeulu is imprisoned for thirty-two days. After his release, things are no longer what they used to be; he returns to Umuaro to confront a devastating drought and intense political friction within the clan. He suspects his opponents of conspiracy to weaken his authority during his absence.One of his sons, Obika, dies after participating in a traditional ritual and, at the end of the novel, Ezeulu is perceived as a broken man. He is overwhelmed by grief and loses his mind. Republicanism prevails among the six villages of the tribe, which have always resisted British attempts to introduce monarchism into tribal systems of government, but colonial rule and Christianity are firmly entrenched when the story ends. This means the novel is about resilience, that tribal community is renewed because Christianity triumphs in the "Battle of the Gods", so that "when one god fails, another will provide" (Muoneke 164-165).

CULTURE, POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY

The novel's central theme "can be summarized as that of culture contact and culture conflict in a situation where a culture which was previously self-sufficient begins to disintegrate in the face of an onslaught from the culture of an alien people who are politically more powerful. The contradictions in Ezeulu's society are of course multifarious ... But the greatest contradiction is the one between the culture of Umuaro and the culture of the new arrivals – the British Administration and the missionaries" (Ngara 70). According to John O. Jordan, cultural conflict is the main theme of most Anglophone African novels. Jordan is not quite correct to imply that Arrow of God focuses exclusively on culture clash; he should also have mentioned religious conflict, in his essay, "Culture Conflict and Social Change in Achebe's 'Arrow of God'." However, Jordan is right to point out that intra-tribal tensions in Umuaro are exacerbated by the British colonial policy of 'divide and rule', and its attempts to impose chieftaincy on native systems of government. Igbo leaders reject chieftaincy; they see it as a variation of monarchism, an alien practice. Jordan, again rightly, states that the novel accepts cultural differences, but rejects any valorization of culture 'per se', because such valorization inevitably leads to a sanctioning of hegemony. I also support his position that Ezeulu's comprador status is symbolically amplified by Achebe's deliberate delineation, that highlights the similarities between Ezeulu and Winterbottom:

> Each is the son of a priest, and each sees his role in society as both religious and political: Ezeulu as the priest of Ulu and Winterbottom as servant of "the call" which he has answered by coming to Africa. Both men are quick to

> anger, exceeding proud and, in particular, vain of the titles by which they are known: Winterbottom as "the Captain" and Ezeulu, whose name means literally "priest of Ulu". Both are surrounded by younger men who disagree with them ... and both adopt unpopular political positions which challenge the prevailing opinion: Ezeulu by opposing the war [with Okperi] and befriending the whites and Winterbottom by opposing the system of paramount chiefs (71).

These are two mavericks, soul mates, who epitomize disruption. They may be culturally different, but they are definitely the same, temperamentally. Jordan believes Arrow of God even hints that, metaphorically, Ezeulu and Winterbottom subscribe to the same ideal of social change: "The opening scene of the novel, with Ezeulu watching for the new moon from the entrance to his "obi" [hut], has a direct parallel at the beginning of Chapter 3, when Winterbottom watches the first rain from the verandah of his bungalow" (72). The rain and moon, for Jordan, are metaphors about cleansing and novelty, respectively. In sum, he asserts that Achebe delineates Ezeulu and Winterbottom in a culturally balanced manner, without stereotypes. The novel is about reconciliation, which comes about because of the friction that predates colonialism, and social change is inevitable. Colonialism is ancillary. Achebe gives an anthropological perspective, not a theoretical one, that says change "tends to be selective and additive rather than substitutive" (Jordan 82).

Simon Gikandi, in his "Chinua Achebe and the Post-Colonial Esthetic: Writing, Identity and National Formation", theorizes that Achebe's epistemological context relies heavily on a nationalist tradition, a "desire to negate the colonial episteme and replace it by a new, African narrative and, by extension, order of knowledge" (30). Gikandi says that Achebe's literary project is to use the novel as a tool for reshaping African cultures,

at the moment when the colonial changes into the postcolonial. Achebe, he continues, believes that fictional writing should offer a different perspective from "the unitary web of vision" of imperialist discourse that Edward Said denigrates in Orientalism. "Achebe's textual practice, then, seeks not only to mediate the African experience through a different order of discourse, but also to transform and re-invent the African world" (Gikandi 31). Achebe's quest is for a postcolonial aesthetic that says novelistic discourse can create an alternative illusion of power relations, one that is different from the concrete realities of precolonial and postcolonial Africa. Achebe is an anthropological and ideological writer but art, for him, has the "capacity to reinvent identities and to transform realities" (32). In other words, postcolonial literature must have a counter-hegemonic role. Gikandi reminds us that the colonial literary canon is influenced by Conrad's Heart of Darkness, in which Africa is a land of savages. Such a text, according to Gikandi, operates on two assumptions: (a) that there is "ideological continuity between the colonizer and the colonized", or a sharing of the same cultures, (b) the colonized identifies with the colonizer and, therefore, fails to acknowledge his/her alterity. For Achebe, theorizing about postcolonialism also means challenging colonialism's project, creating a national community and culture through fiction. Consequently, Gikandi continues, Achebe views "identity" as a narrative category and "ideology" as a process or critique, not dogma (33-35). Achebe straddles cultures and uses two different categories (Igbo and English) as "the raw materials of his art" (Gikandi 36). His valorization of Igbo traditions stems from his sense of loss or repression of such traditions by the British. It is therefore not surprising that his novels explore themes of doubleness and duality, which enable him to create an Igbo metaphysics in which there is

a "reversal of concepts and categories", with no "fixed taxonomies" (39). In other words, Achebe's textual practice is replete with dialectical relationships between contraries. Like all Anglophone postcolonial writers, he uses English (the ex-colonizer's language) and the novelistic genre (borrowed from the West) to disrupt the hegemony of Western colonial discourse (37-39).

Arrow of God is about structures resisting each other, co-existing and negotiating between what has existed prior to British colonialism, and what exists now. These structures are tribal, familial and ideological. The ideological structures are largely dependent on the spatial structures; ideology is shaped by where one is located. For example, because Ezeulu straddles traditional and modern space, the pre-colonial and colonial, he is not dogmatic; his involvement in the colonial sphere makes him ideologically susceptible to colonial indoctrination. He is the opposite of Nwaka who is located only in pre-colonial space, and is therefore very hostile to Westernization. The stakes are high because the conflict is between public and domestic ideology and, if Ezeulu fails in his mission of reconciling tradition with Westernization, it would mean more fragmentation in Umuaro. On the British side, Clarke, Dr. Savage and Captain Winterbottom are ideologically rigid because they are located in colonial space, where violence and duplicity also reside:

> (a) "Well, are you accepting the offer or not?" Clarke glowed with the I-know-this-will-knock-you-over feeling of a benefactor.
> "Tell the white man that Ezeulu will not be anybody's chief, except Ulu."
> "What!" shouted Clarke. "Is the fellow mad?"
> "I tink so sah," said the interpreter.
> "In that case he goes back to prison." Clarke was now really angry. What cheek! A witch-doctor making a fool of the British Administration in public! (196)

(b) ... Both in the hospital and outside in the village Dr. Savage was known as Omesike, One Who Acts With Power, and it was not expected that she would ever cry for a patient, not even when the patient happened to be Captain Winterbottom whom they mischievously called her husband (169).

The point is that Clarke and Dr. Savage, in their different ways, are anxious to save face, to keep up appearances in front of the natives. One must not look weak because weakness is the opposite of strength. Tribe and family are immersed in a struggle that is akin to cultural and political fratricide, that mirrors the clash between colonialism and nativism. The repercussions of the encounter between Igbo and British are a recurrent theme of Achebe's novels, according to James A. Spence in his article, "Power in Achebe's 'Arrow of God'." The novel, in his view, "explores further the distortions of colonialism and the way the flow of history affects both individuals and cultures" (157-158). Spence concludes that it "seems to imply that the world will go its way regardless of whether one labels its events as being caused by man, or society, or a god" (158). This interpretation seems a bit Marxist in its implication that class struggle (in this case, a so-called superior European class versus an African one) is the main agent of historical change. However, he is right because the very historical fact that the British succeeded in colonizing Nigeria also makes Arrow of God a text of Igbo history and sociology. Anne Ruggles Gere would agree with Spence, for she too sees the novel as one of "cultural dislocation" ("An Approach to Achebe's Fiction") and mentions the ambiguity that some critics have noticed in its depiction of disharmony in Umuaro. She says that the frequent clan meetings, and their significance, have been largely overlooked by several of them. These meetings, in her opinion, epitomize the internal struggles in Umuaro which provide insight into the novel itself (27-35). Thus, Umuaro, composite of six villages:

Umuachala, Umunneora, Umuagu, Umuezeani, Umuogwugwu and Umuisiuzo, is a house divided against itself, six little tribal entities of otherness tormented by frequent disputes and civil wars. A similar lack of cohesion prevails in the private sphere, in Ezeulu's compound with its numerous wives, children, sons and daughters-in-law. Sibling rivalry and erosion of authority in his familial structure mirror the tensions in Igbo domestic collectivity. If society is viewed as an extension of the family, the macrocosm as a magnified microcosm, then it is not surprising that tribal and familial structures, in Arrow of God, reflect each other. What is surprising, since both structures are located in the same cultural sphere, the same native space, is that they do not share similar ideology. Conservative ideology, in Ezeulu's household, does not accommodate or co-exist with progressive ideology (both challenge each other); Igbo practices clash with Christian beliefs, as the python incident seems to indicate. Umuaro is totally located in the past and present, and occupies a hermetically-sealed cultural space, while Ezeulu's house sits in open space – open to Western cultural and religious influences because his son, Oduche, has one foot in the native camp and the other in the Christian domain. Ezeulu's "familia" as an alternative, competing social unit, is the periphery, from the tribe's perspective, an 'other'. Umuaro's six villages consider themselves the center, collectively, the guardian of Igbo identity. Nevertheless, both are treated as marginal by the colonial structure, the "de facto" center, which also has cracks:

> The other Europeans did not belong to the Administration. Roberts was an Assistant Superintendent of Police ... Wade was in charge of the prison; he was also called Assistant Superintendent. The other man, Wright, did not really belong to the station. He was a Public Works Department man supervising the new road to Umuaro. Captain Winterbottom had already had cause to talk to him seriously about his behavior, especially with native women. It was absolutely imperative, he told him, that every European in Nigeria, particularly those in such a

> lonely outpost as Okperi, should not lower themselves in the eyes of the natives. In such a place the District Officer was something of a school prefect and Captain Winterbottom was determined to do his duty. He would go as far as barring Wright from the club unless he showed a marked change (35).

The passage exhibits friction in colonial space, which is similar to turmoil within the tribe. Consequently, center and periphery are equal, symbolically, but unequal – politically. Conflict also exists in linguistic structures, the use of English as the language and tool of British hegemony and Western ideology. Igbo (e.g. "Umuaro Kwenu! Hem! Kwezuenu! Hem!", the lingua franca of Umuaro and English (the official language of colonization) are binary oppositional signifiers of power and identity. For example, the incessant meetings of the tribe and endless use of native proverbs by the elders attest to Igbo loquacity, which exposes an inability to act; they talk more, but do less. "The white man doesn't waste words" (56), and so his language has the semblance of being a cryptic tool of ideological coercion of the few natives who can speak it. Knowledge of English is a signifier of tribal powerlessness and seduction by colonialist ideology:

> Because of his familiarity with the white man's language the carpenter, Moses Unachukwu, although very much older than the two age groups, has come forward to organize them and to take words out of the white man's mouth for them ... Meanwhile Unachukwu's reputation in Umuaro rose to unprecedented heights. It was one thing to claim to speak the white man's tongue and quite another to be seen actually doing it (89).

English is therefore the tool of alterity and transcendence, that makes it possible for one subjectivity to cross over, go outside its own self, to another, in an inter-subjective relation. It grants honor and prestige to Moses Unachukwu and makes him a cultural hybrid. Languages (discourses) intersect with each other (Holquist 291), and this is what happens in the case of Igbo and English in Arrow of God. Annie Gagiano believes Bakhtin's ideas concerning linguistic conflicts and social heteroglossia are relevant in

discussing Achebe's works because Achebe problematizes spheres of existence "in the very act of re-creating them fictionally" (60). Achebe is "the encompassing artist that he has shown himself to be partly by showing us, in English, the competing languages of many people – natives versus colonists; proletarians versus government officials; rural versus urban lifestyles; ancient versus modern ... In doing so, Achebe empowers his people's voices to be heard in English, without homogenizing them" (61). This is especially true of Achebe's use of pidgin which, in my view, serves as the 'lingua franca' for all his characters, and enables them to share a common cultural identity, in opposition to a different, Westernized identity.

RELIGION AND COSMOLOGY

M.J. Melamu categorically states that Arrow of God "... must, in part at least, be conceived as an examination of power or the lack of it in the Chief Priest of Ulu" (225). Political and religious authority is embodied in Ezeulu, whose power in Umuaro is aided by what Melamu calls "supernatural agencies." He says that the presumptuous Ezeulu attempts to flaunt his power, even though he is incapable of arrogating Ulu's prerogatives to himself, by promulgating laws for Umuaro. Melamu sees Ezeulu as a man who is greedy for power – power that is not recognized by his own people. Melamu's comments are insightful; they point out the conflation of ideologies in Umuaro, the fusion of religion and politics in Igbo society. There is similar conflation in the colonial chronotope. In the pre-colonial chronotope, a multiplicity of gods dictated Igbo social reality, while colonial chronotopicity is dominated by monotheism, i.e. Christianity. God

and the "egwugwu", the Bible and the python symbolize distinct, religious differences, which Wole Soyinka wrongly ignores in his Myth, Literature and the African World. The book is a response to "English literature traditionalists" who deny the existence of African literature, in their project to perpetuate the Western literary canon. Soyinka says most contemporary African literature is "literature of a secular social vision [that] marks the beginning of a prescriptive validation of an African self-apprehension" that must be constantly and objectively reiterated (xii). His thesis is that the African world, like any other, is steeped in myth and history and we must ignore Africans who have a "colonial mentality", as well as the new black ideologues that are ashamed of the so-called "ideologically backward" African. Myths, Soyinka continues, are a people's attempts to externalize and communicate their inner intuitions and they (i.e. myths) have always been allied with a desire for political power. Soyinka also says an African world-view, in which individual events have communal interpretations and significance, is different from a Western one which is technological. Technology, he believes, exacerbates loneliness and alienation. In the chapter, "Ideology and the Social Vision", Soyinka criticizes Arrow of God for failing to "project a social vision", and focusing exclusively on "evocations of actuality at points where ... Africa was made to leave her history, her true history", thereby creating an "affective reality at whatever point of history he chooses to bring alive" (87). According to Soyinka, Achebe is not the only writer that does this, for African literature generally secularizes African deities, ignores the old by creating new ones. "The gods themselves, unlike the gods of Islam and Christianity are already prone to secularization; they cannot escape their history" (86-87). Still, Soyinka considers Achebe useful, "as a bridge between the entrenchment of deities – indigenous

and foreign – as mentors of social perspectives, and works of an assertive secular vision [for example, Sembene Ousmanne's revolutionary and humanist novel, God's Bits of Wood]". Soyinka specifically takes issue with Arrow of God's secularism, and its "very delicate ambiguity":

> ... Considerations of the authenticity of spiritual inspiration, or of manifestations which may be considered supernatural, or at the least, ominous coincidences, are given alternative (secular) explications in the casual reflections of members of his Igbo community, coloured as always by individual problems or positions taken in sectional confrontations. In short, coloured by their humanity (87).

In other words, religious struggles occur in the political sphere, and the spiritual element in Umuaro society is "deliberately subverted by impure associations insinuated through the manipulations of language, contradictory situations, or the preponderant claims of a secular wisdom". For example, Ezeulu's aphoristic pronouncement, that Umuaro's deities customarily use humans as whips, is a secular philosophy that reinforces the novel's ambiguous treatment of traditional religion (Soyinka 88-89).

Bu-Buakei Jabbi's article, "Myth and Ritual in 'Arrow of God'" dismisses Soyinka's argument that the novel secularizes religious experience. Jabbi accuses Soyinka of unconsciously projecting his own "imaginative space" on the novel, misreading and ignoring its "myth and ritual elements as a significant interpretive frame" (130). Jabbi contends that myths and rituals play a crucial role in any good interpretation of Arrow of God, for they "tend, in their own right, to be intrinsic systems of ideas and general world-views, of modes of perception and sensibility. A more or less cohesive set of propositions about reality and life, about man's place in the world and in time, may often be deduced from them" (132). In addition, myths and rituals have a symbolic

relationship with other artistic elements, with each "potentially open to a whole range of uses and applications", and serving as background material for establishing a "credibly realistic physical world for general verisimilitude" (132). I agree with Jabbi that some of the novel's myths function esthetically as "enabling dramatic occasions for enacting crucial tendencies of character or personality", and for "anticipating subsequent action or event, whereby they may also help shape tone and response" (133). He cites the "adumbrative mutuality of fate and hubristic affinity of temperament" between Ezeulu and his impulsive son, Obika, as a good example of delineation functioning as predictor of future event. In this case, it is Obika's assault on Otakekpeli, the feared medicine-man, during the Akwu Nro festival. This episode is a public enactment of Ezeulu's subsequent clash with Umuaro collectivity. I also support Jabbi's view that myths, in Arrow of God, have "intrinsic cultural meanings". For example, when Umuaro welcomes the new moon once every month, it also reaffirms the "basic unit of [its own] ceremonial cycle", and the Pumpkin Leaves festival is a cleansing ceremony as well as a "pre-planting supplication". Both festivals are "suffused through and through with the general import of the Umuaro myth of origin" (134). Chidi Okonkwo gives a hegemonic twist to Jabbi's interpretation of the New Yam festival. Okonkwo's Decolonization Agonistics in Postcolonial Fiction calls Achebe a "decolonization writer" that portrays progress and modernization as "integral aspects of [Igbo society's] historical dynamics which colonialism arrested and mutilated" (133). The novel's chronology is:

> ... plotted through a rigorous lunar calendar which opens in the planting season and ends in the harvest, with every major event in-between being meticulously integrated within this frame. At the center of this plot are Time/History and the New Yam festival ... The dislocation of this Time/History frame by the colonial District

> Commissioner mirrors the European intervention that disrupted colonized people's histories (53).

Ezeulu's habit of gazing at the sky, to discern the moon, is a metaphor for his insight, prescience and concern for Umuaro's welfare. It is a "meditative habit of intellectual curiosity" which, if unchecked, will lead him to misconstrue Umuaro's "delegated constitutional prescript for an invitation to megalomaniac self-exertion" (Jabbi 137). Ezeulu is a symbol for cultural renewal and, Jabbi believes, that is exactly what Ezeulu's office demands because Umuaro favors an "endogenous inducement of change as a traditional culture function" of Ulu's priesthood to selectively eliminate cultural traits – as two former priests did (141).

Ulu is defeated by an alien Christian god, while the lesser deities ("Ogwugwu", "Eru", "Udo", "Idemili") survive. This means the minor gods have always been more firmly entrenched in Umuaro's tradition than Ulu who, according to Donatus Nwoga's "The Igbo World of 'Arrow of God'", is a religious novelty:

> ... occasioned by external stress. By putting narrative emphasis on Ulu, Achebe was freed from a theological or mythical perspective on religion. He could, therefore, pursue a humanistic direction suitable for the social orientation of his novel. We do not, therefore, ask from 'Arrow of God' the religious and doctrinal confrontation between the religion of the Igbo and that of the invading Europeans. The appropriate question becomes what personal and sociopolitical factors led to the desertion of Ulu, the tragedy of his chief priest, and the conversion of the Igbo to Christianity (20).

This comment is an adequate rationale for the secularization of religious experience that Wole Soyinka vehemently opposes. It evaluates the relationship between Christianity and Ulu worship as an interaction of "cultural and social forces", a "survival stratagem," instead of a relationship between "theological systems" (23). Nwoga calls the novel

Achebe's fictional response to the wrenching, negative experience of British colonialism for Africans. Consequently, Arrow of God recreates Igbo history as Achebe construes it; therefore, to read it solely as the tragedy of Ezeulu and others is, in Nwoga's opinion, to subscribe to a critical tradition that relies entirely on delineation. He challenges the view that the novel is more anthropological and sociological than it is literary and artistic. His view is that Achebe developed the story "with narrative and descriptive strands representing characters, situations, and events that were part of the Igbo way of life, but it was not necessary ... that these be characteristic or representative ... for an anthropological realization of the Igbo world view of history" (16).

Contrary to Nwoga's advice not to dwell on the tragic aspect of Ezeulu's character is Clem Okafor's insistence that Ezeulu is the focus of the story. Ezeulu's hybridity is a paradox; it elevates and isolates him. He is a site for the fusion of human and spiritual identities, "half spirit and half man and therefore possesses a greater insight into things than most ordinary men. This explains why he does not usually discuss his actions with other people; hence even his own sons misunderstand him" (Okafor 211). Okafor posits that, because Ezeulu is a pawn in the Ulu-Idemili conflict, caught in the crossfire of these powerful deities, his demise is inevitable. Ezeulu's downfall is presented in the mythological context of the python incident in which his son, Oduche, locks up the sacred snake in a box. Consequently, the father will have to pay for the son's transgression (Okafor 213). Nevertheless, from Umuaro's perspective, Ezeulu's tragedy (the death of Obika, which causes his father's insanity) is due to his stubbornness and personal ambition. The villagers believe that his refusal to announce the day for the celebration of the New Yam festival is the cause of the ensuing famine. Thus,

differences abound in Umuaro, regardless of British colonial presence. Ezeulu must confront opposition from two fronts. First, he must fend off Nwaka's challenge to his social and political standing. Second, Ezidemili (priest of Umuneora) harbors a grudge against Ezeulu for supplanting him as the religious head of the combined villages; Idemili used to be the religious 'primus inter pares' or first among the six priests, and would have liked to stay that way.

Chapter Two
Politics, Ideology, and Westernization:
Petals of Blood and Anthills of the Savannah

Ngugi's Petals of Blood is more ideological than Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah. While both examine the ramifications of independence in the postcolonial state, Ngugi's solutions to the problems are more radical than Achebe's. Achebe is more sanguine about the future of the postcolonial state and its inhabitants; he views it as imperfect, a work in progress, but never advocates a return to the past as Ngugi does. Petals of Blood (1977) is Ngugi's fourth novel and, unlike his first three, deals with Kenya's post-independence landscape. Ngugi wrote Devil on the Cross (1980) during his detention for one year, for political reasons, because the authorities did not like his play, Ngaahika Ndeenda ("IWill Marry When I Want"). Petals of Blood is about politics, corruption and capitalism in Kenya, and how the few enrich themselves at the expense of the many. The British have handed over power to indigenous politicians who are intoxicated with their new status. The novel is also a murder mystery: three members of the corrupt class are killed in a fire at the house of their favorite prostitute (Wanja). Some believe that the fire is the work of an arsonist; others think it is an accident. The three victims are Kimeria (a politician and businessman), Chui (also a businessman) and Mzigo, an educator who is the business partner of the other two. Kimeria is a traitor who made a fortune carrying the bodies of dead Mau Mau fighters during Kenya's struggle to win independence from Britain. He never fought against the British. Ironically, after independence, the new government awarded Kimeria lucrative contracts. Chui also benefited economically. During his student days, he was a radical crusader, a socialist champion of students' and workers' rights. Mzigo is Munira's immediate boss, who

seldom visits schools that are located in remote areas. Other major characters, besides Wanja, are: Godfrey Munira, a school teacher; his friend and colleague, Karega; and Abdulla, an ex-freedom-fighter.

A police officer suspects the main character, Munira, of the triple murder and detains him for questioning. Munira's interrogation serves as the narrative foundation of the story because, through him, Ngugi uses flash-backs to reconstruct past events leading up to the present moment of the triple murder and the social chaos. However, Munira is not the sole narrator. Wanja, Karega and Abdulla also offer their perspectives, including Ngugi himself whose authorial voice periodically interjects and ironizes his characters' testimony. The story's chronology spans twelve years, and the narrative structure is divided into four parts. Part One focuses on Old Ilmorog, rural Kenya, and the recurring drought that frustrates the villagers' efforts to plant their crops and make a decent living. The elders decide to send a delegation to Nairobi, the capital, to plead with their Member of Parliament (a corrupt, incompetent parasite named Nderi wa Riera) to do something about their plight. Part Two deals with the delegation's journey. Part Three covers mundane affairs in Old Ilmorog and the romance between Wanja and Karega. In Part Four, the denouement, Old Ilmorog is transformed into New Ilmorog, a carbon copy of Nairobi. Ilmorog is now urban, with shops, banks, a tourist center and the new Trans-Africa highway. Part Four is where the triple murder occurs. As it turns out, Munira confesses to the crime; he tells his police interrogator that he did it to save his friend, Karega, from Wanja's "Jezebel" clutches, and that "voices" (God's law) commanded him to do it. Incidentally, it must be noted that, recently and prior to the murder, Munira embraced Christian evangelism.

In Petals of Blood, Old Ilmorog is preferable to new Ilmorog not only because its people are simple and uncorrupt, but also due to the fact that their society is linked to a long chain of African history, its glory and patriotic heroes. Petals of Blood is an allegorical novel because of its ostensible murder-plot, which is merely a framework for the underlying, more serious condemnation of postcolonial Kenya. Like George Orwell's Animal Farm, Ngugi's novel is about disillusionment, how a new order does not, by definition, usher in change. The new Kenyan masters are no longer 'others' from England; they are indigenous, which does not mean much, from the perspective of the oppressed. Postcolonial Kenya, like Kangan in Anthills of the Savannah, is ruled by elites who have embraced Westernization, which Aime Cesaire considers incapable of solving colonial problems, that have spilled over to the postcolonial landscape (Discourse On Colonialism). The West, he says, was deceitful because it refused to justify colonialism on rational, moral grounds, relying instead on cultural and ideological superiority. The creation of a political dualism (Old and New Ilmorog) is Ngugi's master-stroke, because it is an effective strategy to compare past and present social realities in the periphery, in relation to the new center, Nairobi. It also makes the entire landscape a dichotomy, a site for good and evil, that his protagonists also embody.

Characters in Petals of Blood are cultural hybrids who dress in Western clothes, drink imported "Tusker" and "Pilsner" beer (as well as "theng'eta", the local brew) and listen to Western music. They are also ideologically hybridized in subscribing to the economic and religious ideas of the West on one hand, while clinging to animistic and nativist ideas of community, on the other. Postcolonial elites, in the novel, are not thoroughly Westernized vis a vis their practice of democracy; they alienate the lower

class and transform Kenya into a kleptocracy. Gradually, Old Ilmorog loses its innocence, is tainted by the corruption oozing from Nairobi, and mutates into New Ilmorog. It is a matter of two entities in collision, each perceiving the other as different. Ironically, both end up being the same, equalized by the agents of progress – new roads, shops, churches, banks – and polluted by the same squalor and moral decadence. Ngugi offers a radical solution, a cultural liberation struggle, a return to the past in all its glory and simplicity, led by the workers and peasants.

Chinua Achebe, in contrast, does not advocate or champion nativism as the only solution to Nigeria's problems in Anthills of the Savannah; he is not a Marxist either. He is aware of the importance of history in shaping the present, and colonialism's responsibility for most of the problems that inhabitants of the postcolonial state encounter everyday. However, he is more forward-looking than Ngugi; Achebe is optimistic about the future of Nigeria, which he views as going through an experimental phase, one that needs to incorporate the good things from its pre-colonial and colonial past, and learn from its postcolonial mistakes. He explores issues relating to identity and presents postcoloniality in terms of affiliation, and disruption that generate corruption and disharmony. Anthills of the Savannah's major characters are: Sam, Head of State and military dictator of Kangan (the fictional name for Nigeria); Chris, the Commissioner for Information; Ikem, editor of the state-controlled National Gazette; Beatrice, an Assistant Secretary in the civil service, at the Ministry of Finance, and Mad Medico. Mad Medico is an Englishman who works at the state-owned hospital in Bassa, Kangan's capital. All five are friends, and their friendship dates back to the time when Sam took courses at Sandhurst, the prestigious war college in England. In those days, Kangan was a British

colony. Chris, Ikem and Beatrice were also students in England at the same time, and Mad Medico had not yet left for Africa. When the story begins, Sam has recently overthrown the elected civilian government that took over after independence. He appoints all his friends to lucrative positions. Half way through the story, Chris and Ikem begin to have second thoughts about their participation in Sam's administration, his paranoia and growing suspicion of his friends. Sam accuses Chris and Ikem of disloyalty, and grumbles that they did not fully support his bid to become President-for-Life.

Meanwhile, the political and social situation worsens; Sam's secret police terrorizes everyone and crime increases. Tensions between the capital and the largest city in the north also heighten. Abazonians perceive themselves as different from residents of Bassa; they (Abazonians) claim the moral high ground, but resent their lack of involvement in the political and economic affairs of the country (Ikem, born in Abazon, is the exception). By the end of the novel, Ikem is murdered, apparently on Sam's orders, because of his growing criticism of the government. The army stages another coup and installs its Chief of Staff as the new president. The mob abducts Sam from his presidential palace, and nobody knows what happens to him. An intoxicated police officer shoots and kills Chris, as he tries to save a young girl at a police checkpoint. Chris has been riding the same bus as this female passenger. He was heading north, fleeing the chaos in Bassa. In the final episode, Beatrice organizes a naming ceremony for Ikem's child whose mother, Elewa, is the late crusader's girlfriend. She gives birth after he dies. Gender issues are also examined in the novel, and there are numerous signifiers of alterity and hybridity. For example, the major characters (Chris, Ikem, Sam

and Beatrice) have internalized Western values and, as a result, are perceived as different by the indigenous Kangan masses as well as the ex-colonizer himself (represented by Mad Medico). These characters are also undermined through their in-between location in pre-colonial and colonial space, their appropriation of imperial signs and frustrated attempts at protecting their native selves. Their voices are simultaneously similar and different – they share a common language, pidgin (which is a linguistic hybrid), but express conflicting views concerning politics and life in Kangan. Kangan itself is a hybrid structure, a fusion of tribal, national, Igbo and English entities; it mutates from affiliation to autocracy, and then chaos. A similar fusion (Gikuyu and English) occurs in Petals of Blood, whose major characters also offer different testimonials to Kenya's political and social realities, while professing similar sympathies for the oppressed.

Together, Petals of Blood and Anthills of the Savannah comprise a dialogue about postcoloniality and the postcolonial landscape, that it (postcoloniality) is manifested by one alterity relating to a different one, in a syncretizing rather than antithetical relation. Both novels constitute a unified voice, in an attempt to present a common portrait of otherness and hybridity in the postcolonial landscape, irrespective of their different geographical sites. Psychoanalytically, both texts are simultaneous events of alterity and hybridity that appear to be unrelated but which, in my view, are not just mere coincidences. Petals of Blood was composed (1975) before Anthills of the Savannah (1987); in fact, it may seem as if Achebe borrowed a lot from Ngugi's novel. Whether or not this is the case, both inescapably relate to each other intertextually. They are diachronically related in signifying difference and fusion as synchronous events, in conjunction, in a similar chronotope (same era of independence, same topography of

binary oppositional structures – tribe/nation; center/margin; Igbo/Kangan; Gikuyu/Kenya; Nairobi/Ilmorog and Bassa/Abazon respectively). In other words, both locate alterity and hybridity in urban, rural and tribal sites, and their characters can equally be construed as sites, not just separate representations of ipseity. Together, characters in Petals of Blood and Anthills of the Savannah constitute a postcolonial community and consciousness, which leads to the conclusion that these texts are thematically linked and their characters' voices are dialogically related. Both novels are polyphonous; they use multiple testimonial voices (Munira, Karega, Abdulla, Wanja in Petals of Blood; Chris, Ikem, Beatrice in Anthills of the Savannah). The utterances of all these characters accomplish two things: (a) operate on a dialogic axis and (b) function as "sociolects" (Bakhtin's term) that present their individual perspectives on events. They are witnesses to the events, in addition to their authors whose voices also operate dialogically in relation to the characters'. The reader, as interlocutor, occupies the vantage position of referee and his or her own voice (i.e. reader-response) not only mediates the heteroglossia of both texts, but also he is in a position to observe how the characters' selves are undermined. The characters are not just speaking to the reader; each is challenging the others' interpretation of events, struggling to drown the others' voices and that of the omniscient author. Consequently, there is a triangulation of voices – authors', characters' and reader's – all in a dialogic relationship.

Generally, in Petals of Blood and Anthills of the Savannah, alterity is located in the binary relationships of city/village, African/Western, government/governed, peasants/elites, same tribe/different tribe, history/present (or precolonial, colonial/postcolonial). Specifically, Petals of Blood has two basic structures of alterity:

Ilmorog which is a dichotomy of Old and New, and Nairobi. The same is true for Anthills of the Savannah: Abazon and Bassa, one rural structure locked in a struggle with an urban center. Inhabiting these structures are the varied embodiments of difference, the characters, whose intentions relate not only to their authors but to each other as well. The intersection of multiple contexts in these characters' utterances, what Bakhtin calls "novelistic dialogism", is a characteristic epistemological mode. The major characters' testimonies (which are really polemical discourses) constitute polyphony, which is organized through dialogism, because the testimonies are interactive (from the reader's perspective). Thus, Ikem, Chris, Beatrice (Anthills of the Savannah) and Munira, Karega, Abdulla, Wanja (Petals of Blood) reveal inner conflicts in their own words, rather than Achebe and Ngugi telling the reader what these conflicts are. The characters are multiple, cognitive subjects that have equal rights with Achebe and Ngugi, who are also participants in the conversation. Both authors present the self-consciousness of solipsistic characters (solipsistic because each is conscious of what the other is not; each is an 'other' to the other one). They are all also hybrid.

Hybridity itself means the "mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance", according to Bakhtin (362), an instance of "stylization". In the case of Anthills of the Savannah, it occurs in Achebe's use of pidgin, his borrowing from the English language to parody his characters. In Petals of Blood, "stylization" encompasses the sprinkling of Gikuyu words in the characters' utterances. Hybridity, in both novels, is featured in the antagonistic double-voicedness and double-wordedness of the characters. Western and native (e.g. Gikuyu and Igbo juxtaposed with English) discourses are combined, and the ensuing hybridization is grounded on Europeanization, the imposition

of an authoritative, foreign language that attests to the continuation of European culture, superimposed on Gikuyu and Igbo practices in the postcolonial landscape. Thus, Petals of Blood and Anthills of the Savannah are textual examples of mimicry, which makes Ngugi and Achebe hybrid writers, open to both African and English worlds, and struggling to deny the presence of a colonial text. This colonial text is not only signified by the use of English, the language of the ex-colonizer, but also the intertextual uses of the Western canon (e.g. references to the Bible, Shakespeare and epigraphs culled from poems by Walt Whitman and William Blake). In addition, both novels rely heavily on T.S. Eliot's wasteland motif, to portray the postcolonial landscape. The friction of argument between the varied perspectives of characters in the two novels is also reminiscent of the polyglottic construction of Eliot's poem. Eliot's voice coexists with the multiple voices of the poetic personalities the same way Ngugi's and Achebe's are juxtaposed with their characters'. The characters are aware of themselves as participants in a narrative – which also means that the texts are self-conscious and, hence, intertexual. In both novels, the ideological world (what Bakhtin calls "subjective belief system") of the reader is the site for the double-voicedness of the characters' testimonies, including the object (usually another character) of their discourses. That is, the reader is equated with a character being talked about by another character, making both of them listeners to the voiced ruminations of that particular character.

Characters in these works reinforce chronotopic implications, because they are actually present in the past events as well as the moment of narration, able to respond to their authors' utterances and those of their colleagues. In other words, characters and authors coexist and are present in the same postcolonial chronology and landscape (a

double meaning of "present"). They are depicted as seeing themselves and the postcolonial world from their own unique perspective, not how such landscape and they themselves objectively appear. In a Lockeian, sense-data theoretical sense, their knowledge of the environment depends on subjective projection, rather than objective information. This common trait is another example of the intertextual relationship between these novels.

It is not overtly apparent that Anthills of the Savannah deals with the same discourse on alterity and hybridity, but close examination shows that Achebe's novel is an echo or development of Petals of Blood's discourse in what Bakhtin calls "a new context and under new conditions" (347), a mild form of borrowing. Achebe and Ngugi use alterity, or a multiplicity of criteria of difference to portray cognitive relations between cognitive characters, and the objects of their cognitive quests (i.e. characters are simultaneously subjects and objects – they talk and are talked about); their subjectivity is interrupted. Alterity, in both novels, is a discoursive condition for recognizing a political subject and public truth, the characters as political bodies and their testimonies (whether or not they are truisms). Alterity, otherness, is also the postcoloniality of the major characters that challenges the precoloniality and coloniality that reside in their other selves, a consciousness that is the differential relation between their internalization of Westernization and struggle to maintain their native heritage. A similar differential relation exists in the structures. For example, Nairobi is the center while Ilmorog is the periphery in Petals of Blood; in Anthills of the Savannah, Bassa is the center and Abazon occupies the margin. Difference encompasses philosophy, anthropology, Kenyan, Gikuyu, Igbo and African history; ideology and the clash between capitalism and

Marxism in Petals of Blood. In Anthills of the Savannah, difference is located in Abazon, a site that is ridden with dissatisfaction, discomfort, disloyality to Sam, and anxiety about the future. Bassa, Kangan's capital, uses otherness as a tool to maintain its hegemonic grip over Abazon. In Ngugi's novel, Ilmorogness is equated with centeredness, and non-Ilmorogness with otherness. The condition of being different is manifested in the context of binary oppositions in Petals of Blood and Anthills of the Savannah; city/village; European/African; government/governed; elites/masses; Christianity/native religion. It is also cultural diversity (epitomized by the different practices of politicians, Europeans, Africans, elites, peasants, major and minor characters). Lastly, it is an instance of epistemological, ideological and linguistic difference. Most important, it is contralateral – affects the site on which it is located (e.g. Abazon is underdeveloped because it is not Bassa; Nairobi is corrupt because it is different from Ilmorog).

Hybridity, in both novels, is also contralateral meaning that the in-betweeness of the characters is the result of their having two or more 'other' identities inhabiting their postcolonial subjectivity. The characters are different because they are differently hybridized; their cultural and ideological dualism, their simultaneity (i.e. their delineation in a relation of same/different) is dialogized. Their narrative voices have the capability to unmask their submerged identities, to ironize and betray the 'other' within the same utterance. Bakhtin's notion of "intentional hybridity" applies to Ngugi and Achebe; both deliberately set the different perspectives of their characters against each other. Petals of Blood and Anthills of the Savannah also employ Bakhtin's "organic hybridity" in fusing history with the present (pre-colonial/colonial and postcolonial) to produce a new Kenyan

and Nigerian world-view, respectively. In these novels, hybridity is an antithetical movement of coalescence of antagonism involving Ilmorogans, Nairobians, Abazonians, Bassans, politicians, peasants and elites. It seeks to neutralize otherness, and is a tool for creating postcolonial subjectivity. Hybridity is a signifier of the productivity of colonial power, the reversal of the process of domination; colonialism produced hybridity, not colonial authority or suppression of nativism, because "the display of hybridity – its peculiar 'replication' – terrorizes authority with the ruse of recognition, its mimicry, its mockery" (Bhabha, "Signs Taken" 157). Just as the pre-existing native culture in Kenya and Nigeria did not disappear during colonialism (but instead became, in Bhabha's words, a "continued agony"), it still persists in the postcolonial landscape. Thus, in Petals of Blood and Anthills of the Savannah, hybridity is a "partializing process ... best described as a metonymy of presence" (Bhabha 157) of the ex-colonizer. This means that the major characters are ambivalent, fractured selves whose "culture, as a colonial space of intervention and agonism ... can be transformed by the unpredictable and partial desire of hybridity" (157). In other words, it is also a psychoanalytic notion. In such a context, alterity (otherness, difference) is internal, within the framework of disavowal of colonial authority; it (alterity) becomes a presence and a pressure from within.

IDEOLOGY, IDENTITY AND CULTURAL FUSION

In Petals of Blood, otherness primarily encompasses the major characters' perspectives, which are relative, and each character is simultaneously a 'self' and an 'other'. Each is undermined by interpersonal dichotomy. Second, otherness exists in the

political and social structures of Ilmorog and Nairobi; in both sites, cultural identity, per se, is not hermetically sealed because it is also part of Kenya's historical process, one that mandated contact with otherness, symbolized by British colonialism. Consequently, cultural identity, in Ngugi's novel, is itself dialogic and engaged in a dialogue with different cultures. Petals of Blood, as praxis, is an intercultural phenomenon of artistic influences from the West (the Bible and Shakespeare, for example), which also implies that it is receptive of alterity. It is therefore not surprising that Ngugi's novel alludes a great deal to the Western canon, the repository of Western ideology, to signify an ideology of difference that is oppositional to a new Kenyan ideology (as he constructs it). Even Bakhtin himself acknowledges the necessity of an ideology of alterity in his dialogic principle; cultural identity, according to him, goes hand in hand with otherness. Cultural specificity, being an Ilmorogan or Kenyan, in Petals of Blood, operates as cultural dialogism because, in a historical process (colonialism up to, and after independence), it is non-finite. According to Bakhtin, culture is a locus for marginality to undermine centeredness. Similarly, the postcolonial landscape in Petals of Blood is a site for cultural differences, collision between Westernization and nativism. Ilmorog represents a symbolic structure of colonial disavowal, while Nairobi becomes the new center of "the colonial construction of the cultural, the site of the civilizing mission" (Bhabha, "Signs Taken" 156).

Cultural hybridity is also found in the emergence of new identities of the characters, the fusion of their traditional, colonial and postcolonial identities. For example, Ilmorogans appropriate the notion of "iron horse" (for 'railroad' in the American frontier) to fit their idea of bicycle, "metal horse". The site of the first

encounter between Western education and tradition is the acacia bush, the legendary resting place of Ndemi, the spiritual patron of Old Ilmorog. In postcolonial Ilmorog, industrialization and modernism are viewed as diseases that afflict those who have abandoned tradition:

> "Our young men and women have left us. The glittering metal [money] has called them. They go, and the young women only return now and then to deposit the newborn with their grandmothers ... They say: there in the city there is room for only one ... our employers, they don't want babies about the tiny rooms in tiny yards ... The young men also. Some go and never return. Others sometimes come to see the wives they left behind, make them round-bellied, and quickly go away as if driven from Ilmorog by Uhere and Mutungu'u [measles and smallpox] generation: for was it not the same skin disease and plagues that once in earlier times weakened our people in face of the Mzungu [whiteman] invasion?" (Petals of Blood 7)

In this utterance, Ilmorogans deconstruct difference ("in face of") in medical, military terms and in-betweeness in an economic, capitalistic context. Difference is also contemplated in a historical context, while sameness occupies the present, in the younger generation's embrace of capitalism. Alien invasion caused Ilmorogans to lose their pre-colonial identity, but it also fermented colonial desire. Pre-colonial Ilmorog always measured prosperity in terms of land, agriculture and cattle. Now, in postcolonial Ilmorog, progress and modernization, though tolerated, constitute foreigness and alienation. For example, Munira's educating mission is welcomed, but Ilmorogans still view him as an 'other' from ILimuru:

> He became a daily feature in Ilmorog, a guardian knight of knowledge ... It was enough for him that to the old men and women and others in Ilmorog he was the teacher of their children, the one who carried the wisdom of the new age in his head. They appreciated it that he from the other world had agreed to stay among them. They could see his

> readiness to stay in his eyes, which did not carry
> restlessness: the others had always carried wanting-to-run-
> away eyes ... (16).

Ironically, they are unaware that Munira is tormented and conflicted, that he constantly questions his own reasons for staying in Ilmorog. Old Ilmorog, as a social reality, mutates into New Ilmorog. For example, its barter system of conducting commerce has become monetarized. Religion, in New Ilmorog, is a battle between Christianity and traditional religion, an ideological clash that fractures Gikuyu identity (Ilmorogans are also Gikuyus). In pre-colonial days, this identity was intact, heremetically sealed, and traditional religion was heavily dependent on a few revered personalities that were also apotheosized:

> ... Mwathi wa Mugo was the spiritual power over both
> Ilmorog ridge and Ilmorog plains, somehow, invisibly,
> regulating their lives. He it was who advised on the best
> day for planting seeds or the appropriate day for the
> herdsmen to move (17).

This passage also shows that time was calculated based on the seasons. Taxation in Old Ilmorog continues in New Ilmorog, and the same alien invasion of the former by Europeans is replicated in the latter by other Kenyans: Munira, Karega, Abdulla and Wanja. New Ilmorog, a "rural cloister" for Munira (24), is an idyllic and caring structure. Whenever an airplane flies over, peasants abandon their work in the fields to admire it. Similarly, when Ritho the engineer and his crew come to survey land for the construction of the trans-Africa highway, the villagers crowd around and observe their work, even though the highway is a symbol of duplicity:

> ... We are opening a highway
> Is it for good?
> Is it for evil?
> It is for both (265).

On one hand, it is a monument to global capitalism financed by foreign banks, and a tribute to the modernistic aspirations of Kenyans. On the other hand, the road represents "hollowness and failed promises" because Ilmorogans, though "catapulted" into modernism by it, do not individually benefit from this structure economically (262). Postcolonial Ilmorog is a site for the collision between global capitalism and native economy, and postcolonial Kenya, from Ngugi's perspective, has become a client state of the West. Ngugi is "essentially preoccupied with unmasking the pornographic and obscene role of the comprador class spawned and groomed by imperialism in Africa so as to play the part of intermediary, pimping for imperialist finance capital" (Kamenju 131). Despite the grandiose claims made concerning the highway, that it would stretch from Zaire and Nigeria and "onto the land of the white people across the red sea", it is a Manichean structure, a double-edged sword that will enhance commerce and cause government appropriation of land, before its construction. It simultaneously promotes progress and destroys Ilmorog's pastoral way of life, since the "bush", "grass", and "huts" are bulldozed to make it possible.

In Old Ilmorog, donkeys served as the means of transportation; in New Ilmorog it is "Ford Anglia" that is used as "Matatu taxi". Ilmorog may be as old as antiquity because its river is possibly "one of those referred to in ancient Hindu and Egyptian sacred literatures" (67), and the walls of its ridges might have been "part of Ptolemy's Lunae Montes or the Chandravata referred to in the Vedas" (67), the entire body of Hindu sacred writings in four books (Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda, Atharva-Veda and Yajaur-Veda). According to folklore, Old Ilmorog was the site of a parade of titans, Western and Kenyan, and the encounter between varied entities:

> From Agu and Agu, Tene wa tene, from long long before the Manjiri generation, the highway had seen more than its fair share of adventurers from the north and north-west. Solomon's suitors for myrrh and frankincense; Zeus' children in a royal hunt for the seat of the sun-god of the Nile; scouts and emissaries of Genghis Khan; Arab geographers and also hunters for slaves and ivory; soul and gold merchants from Gaul and from Bismarck's Germany; land pirates and human game-hunters from Victorian and Edwardian England; they had all passed here ... and God's children [Ilmorogans] had, through struggle, survived every onslaught ... and continued their eternal wrestling with nature and with their separate gods and mutual selves (68).

In this passage, Old Ilmorog is presented in the context of Western ideology and hegemony, the same picture that emerges of New Ilmorog, The implication is that Ilmorog is accustomed to foreign invaders, military and otherwise. The problem, though, is that such exposure is romanticized in a folkloric chronotope, but lamented in the social reality of postcolonial Kenya. The passage acknowledges that Ilmorog has always been plagued by ideological conflicts long before British colonization, that alterity and hybridity inhabited Ilmorog's pre-colonial space ("wrestling with their separate gods and mutual selves"). Here we also have a good example of Ngugi's fondness for retreating into history, whenever he wants to describe and explain the ontology of Gikuyu identity; he locates Ilmorog, as a cultural entity, in the past and uses mythology to particularize the Gikuyu world, one in which events (real or imagined) have communal interpretation and significance. However, the questions that should be posed are: If cultural and ideological collision is inexorable in the mythological, historical context, why is it not in the real, present moment of postcoloniality? Is Ngugi afraid to deal with cultural realities, hiding instead behind history the same way he lets his major characters take refuge in narrative testimonials, so as to construct imagined realities in postcolonial

Kenya? Ngugi seems to be putting greater emphasis on culture and ideology as anchors of Western hegemony, an idea that Abdul JanMohamed totally rejects. JanMohamed considers military and technological prowess more relevant in any discussion of colonial domination. He says that Ngugi is incensed by Western intellectuals' Conradian portrayal of Africans as uncivilized and puerile (e.g. the British historian, Hugh Trevor Roper, who wrote that the African continent's heart was scarcely beating when Europeans first landed). JanMohamed takes issue with Ngugi's contention that, because the ex-colonizer was afraid of colonized peoples' assertion of their culture through history, he 'denigrated' them. It was the "economic drives" of the ex-colonizer that led to the subjugation of Africans by Europeans, according to JanMohamed. "The point is that Ngugi's interpretation tends to romanticize the relations between the two cultures. This kind of idealization implies an inability, or at least an unsuccessful effort, to extricate oneself from the affective aspects of negative influence, from the resentment caused by colonial denigration" (185-186). Colonial exploitation is another cause of Ngugi's resentment, especially the period between World Wars I and II when even non-Europeans participated in such endeavor. Take, for example, Ramjeeh Ramlagoon Dharamashah, an East Indian trader settled in Old Ilmorog. His activities serve as a metaphor for the kind of exploitation that Ngugi so vividly condemns:

> ...He put up an iron roof and iron walls and settled into business. He sold salt, sugar, curry and cloth and also beans, potatoes and maize he had bought from the same farmers more cheaply during harvest-time ... He also got a helper in the shop and around the house, Njogu's daughter from Ilmorog. She was very useful, especially when Dharamashah's wife was away in India or some other place. She too became round-bellied. Dharamashah, it is said, paid her a lot of money and sent her to the city where

> he would often visit her in secret, half-acknowledging his only son by a black woman (Petals of Blood 69).

Incidentally, Dharamashah was driven out; he received a threatening letter from Ole Masai (the Mau Mau) 'somewhere in Nyandarura Forest', and the villagers looted his shop. Later, another outsider (Abdulla) fills the void created by Dharamashah's hasty departure.

What all this means is that tribe and race, as Kwame Anthony Appiah would argue, are not very helpful in defining African identity because "... identities are complex and multiple and grow out of a history of changing responses to economic, political, and cultural forces, almost always in opposition to other identities." All identities, he continues, should be constructed without recourse to race, sex or even religion (178). I do not accept Appiah's argument, and it is not true that identities are "almost always" in oppositional relations. If so, then there would be no room for hybridity. Specifically, in Petals of Blood, there would be no New Ilmorog, a site for hybridization and ideological internalization, where foreign and indigenous practices and ideas not only coexist, but also aspire toward assimilation of each other. "Foreign", in this case, applies to both Europe and Nairobi, the external and internal, for it is clear that events in Nairobi affect New Ilmorog the same way Westernization touches its inhabitants. In pre-colonial times, there was no New Ilmorog because Old Ilmorog was a hermetic society, culturally and ideologically. It became marginalized during colonization, but after Kenya's independence, Nairobi's corrupting influences helped de-marginalize it and, in turn, Nairobi became de-centered. Thus, the novel's treatment of Gikuyu identity is in response to other identities, economic, political and cultural forces, but not necessarily in

an oppositional manner. Gikuyu identity transcends the colonial and postcolonial, as well as urban and rural space. In the chronology of the novel, Gikuyu identity is problematic.

Gikuyu characters not only drink "theng'eta" (the local brew), but "Tusker" and "Pilsner" (imported beers) as well. Even the names of bars attest to Western influence, a coexistence of the foreign and the indigenous: "Mount Kenya", "Muchoru-i", "New Alaska Bar", "Paradise", "Highlands". There you can find:

> ... young men gyrating their bodies in front of the juke-box; young men in tight American jeans and huge belts studded with shiny metal starts, leaning against the walls by the juke-box ... chewing gum or breaking match-sticks between their teeth with the abandoned nonchalance of cowboys in the American Wild West I once saw in a film; young men and bar girls trying out the latest step. To hell with singers [Munira ruminates]. To hell with Wanja and her stories ... We were all strangers ... in our land of birth (Petals of Blood 101).

What Munira really means is that they have all lost their native identity. The passage is a portrait of postcolonial subjects as cultural caricatures, that is reinforced by another example of drunken patrons at Friendly Bar Night Club and Restaurant, who debate the significance of Kenya's history, and its implications for postcoloniality:

> ... They were arguing about the merits and demerits of Kamaru and D.K. He was shouting: Kamaru sings about our past: he looks to our past, he wants to awaken us to the wisdom of our forefathers. What good is that to the chaos that is today? Another was arguing: his is the tinkling of a broken cymbal. But D.K. sings true – about us – the young – here and now – a generation lost in urban chaos. Another interrupted: we are not a lost generation. Do you understand? Don't you go about abusing folk in a bar doing their thing. Gee – I gonna dance to Jim Reeves and Jim Brown and break a safe or two like some cowboys I saw in the Wild Bunch – Gee (101).

Here, Karega is arguing with other customers about Kenyan music in a context of history and cinema. References to Jim Reeves (the late American balladeer of the sixties) and "Wild Bunch" (a violent Western) attest to the growing popularity of American movies in postcolonial Kenya. The native identity of these intoxicated subjects is juxtaposed with American identity, and a different culture is rendered the same as another one, while simultaneously differentiating the two (which is the intended goal of the caricature). Ironically, Ngugi himself does the same thing that he accuses these characters of doing, namely appropriate cultural signs of the West. By appropriating the genre of the realistic novel, he is trapped by its ideological and historical groundings in capitalism. This is a view that Christopher Wise also shares; Wise's exception is that Ngugi "distances himself from the European novel of realism in favor of a distinctly Gikuyu (or African) variety of the novel ... because of the inherently ideological aspects of the novel of realism, which render it increasingly useless to Ngugi in conveying the kind of experience he seeks to convey. Specifically, Ngugi seeks to challenge Western conceptions of individuality (i.e. Kantian and/or Cartesian subjectivity), as well as Western technologies of documenting the social formation of individuals, especially the picaresque novel and the "Bildungsroman", because he believes that the experience of human collectives is infinitely more significant than the experience of the alienated and organic individual of the West" (46). In other words, Ngugi is writing against the Western canon, implying that Westernization breeds cultural and moral decay. Be that as it may, Petals of Blood is still heavily dependent on the Western canon. Part One's epigraph uses two quotations from the Bible and Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass. The "revelation" citation reveals a juxtaposition of colors, red and black in a description of

invading horse-riders, to represent Kenya's cultural landscape. Whitman's "Europe" is subtitled "the 72nd and 73rd Years of These States" (i.e. the United States anniversary of independence). Whitman's poem is relevant because he is generally regarded as the poet of American democracy and the common man. In quoting this poem, Ngugi is implying that Petals of Blood is a postcolonial Leaves of Grass, that it indicts oppression similarly, and venerates Kenyans' struggle to liberate themselves. In Chapter One, the introduction of Munira has Biblical connotations ("They came for him that Sunday. He had just returned from a night's vigil on the mountain"), by making Munira into a Christ-like figure about to be crucified for his role in the murder. This makes him a "Neocolonial Christ for Kenya's oppressors" by restoring a "perverse sort of moral order" (Wise 45). Ngugi uses similar New Testament imagery to describe New Ilmorog.

New Ilmorog, modeled on Eliot's "Wasteland", has a neighborhood called "New Jerusalem", where Abdulla resides; it is an ironic and symbolic structure of desolation combined with optimism. Chapter One also employs a flashback technique of twelve years to begin the story, and ends with the news item of the tripe murder, with allusions to "Gagarin" and "Armstrong" as the victims Chui, Mzigo and Kimeria are equated with the Russian and American astronauts, respectively. Gagarin was the first to orbit the earth, and Neil Armstrong the first to land on the moon. It is a silly image of Western technology applied to the postcolonial sphere. Part Two is titled "Toward Bethlehem", a reference to Jesus Christ's place of birth, with two epigraphs from William Blake's poetry. Nairobi is Kenya's Bethlehem but, instead of a site for salvation, it is the seat of corruption and rottenness. Christ's birth was an event that promised salvation and hope;

independence ushered in disillusionment for Kenyans, and Ilmorogans mistakenly believe that their delegation to Nairobi will be the solution to all their problems.

The only epigraph that is not culled from the Western canon is the poem by Derek Walcott, the West Indian poet, the origin of Ngugi's title ("Petals of Blood"):

> Fearful, original sinuosities! Each mangrove Sapling
> Serpentlike, its roots obscene
> As a six-fingered hand,
>
> Conceals within its clutch the mossbacked toad,
> Toadstools, the potent ginger-lily,
> Petals of blood
>
> The speckled vulva of the tiger-orchid;
> Outlandish phalloi
> Haunting the travelers of its one road.
> ("The Swamp")

This is a scene of sexual confusion and potential danger that foreshadows the chaotic landscape depicted in Ngugi's novel. The message is that nothing makes sense in independent Kenya: victims become victimizers, victims and non-victims are linked to the same prostitute (Wanja); murder is viewed as an accident and a moral cleanser as well as an act of revenge (Munira also considers the murder of Chui, Kimeria and Mzigo poetic justice, that avenges the murder of the radical lawyer who befriended him during the delegation's stay in Nairobi). The poem's imagery is characterized by deviousness, which is the metaphorical interpretation of the curves ("sinuosities"), the poisonous mushrooms (different from edible ones), and the terrestial, tropical tiger-orchid with its conspicuous petals that symbolize female genitalia. This implies that Kenya's postcolonial landscape is libidinized, a forewarning of the major characters' obsession with sex. If, as Robert Young theorizes, "there is no single or correct concept of hybridity" (27), then it can be applied to Ngugi's narrative technique to mean "a

disruption of the Western canon and the postcolonial text, fusing both and making the difference of one into the sameness of the other" (my words). In other words, Petals of Blood is a signifier of hybridization and a site for the collision of varied literary modes. The novel signifies Ngugi's literary ambidexterity, his ability to incorporate the colonial text, the Western canon, in his own while at the same time undermining it. It is a form of double-dealing, straddling two cultures, writing in English while simultaneously attempting to loosen the linguistic hegemony of the language, by sprinkling Gikuyu words and phrases all over the novel: "Mswahili" (Swahili-speaker); "Mswahili Mwislamu wa Bara" (false, bogus Swahili-speaker); "Kamuingi Koyaga ndiri" (unity is strength); "ndungu" (market place); "mwalimu" (teacher).

Despite Ngugi's criticism of Western influences on African intellectuals and writers, he himself is a thoroughly Westernized author who, as James Ogude observes:

> ...is obviously trapped in the Christian moral vision that he has appropriated to explain the nature of the capitalist world. This moral stance also agrees with his epistemological outlook and historical sense, which defines people in terms of good and evil, patriots and traitors, fighters and liberators" (123).

Emmanuel Ngara shares a similar view that Ngugi mixes Western canonical and local elements in his "socialist approach to literary composition". The narrative structure and complexity of the text, according to Ngara, undercuts Ngugi's much publicized protestations of europhonism in other African writers:

> ...external references are an important aspect of the author's use of para-linguistic affective devices. Many of these external references are taken from the literatures of other nations ... Whereas quotations from foreign literatures are used as external references, elements from traditional literature and culture in the form of songs, rhymes and legends are incorporated into the narrative ...

> Ngugi accepts whatever is of literary value from other cultures, while uplifting his own cultural heritage (Art and Ideology 82).

Ngara's comments succinctly bolster my contention that Ngugi is as much a culturally hybridized, ambidextrous personality as his characers in Petals of Blood.

VOICES IN CONFLICT

According to Mineke Schipper's article "Culture, Identity, and Interdiscursivity," Western and twentieth-century constructions of otherness are largely based on "appearance, gender, language, behavior and customs" (39). Schipper rightly contends that this is a controversial, incomplete interpretation that fails to include power relations (e.g. between men and women), but focuses too much on the historicity of otherness. The article theorizes that alterity is habitually defined in a context of social exclusion, that "the possibility of imagining one's self in another person's place is generally restricted to the category of people who belong to one's own group. For this reason, the reality of the out-group cannot be experienced internally" (43). In other words, the reality of quotidian existence is that human beings are psychologically resistant to otherness, and those that they perceive as different. Schipper concludes:

> Dialogue in the interdiscursive sense addresses the theme of the relations between sociolects, opening us to the possibility of calling our own perspectives into question. In this way, it becomes possible for us to overcome our own particularity through dialogic objectivation and detachment. There is no neutral knowledge. In literary texts as well as in theoretical texts, there is always a narrator's perspective. Similarly, in any genuine dialogue, one is obliged to reflect seriously upon one's own discursive practice, thereby moving from an 'intradiscursive' position to an

> 'interdiscursive' one. Because all sociolects are marked by a certain narcissism that binds its practitioners, trapping them in their own monologues, we can never reach the real 'facts' ... (46).

These are insightful and relevant comments, especially when applied to Petals of Blood and Anthills of the Savannah where Ngugi and Achebe, through their respective use of narrative irony, encourage their readers to resist the major characters' propaganda.

The novel's major characters constitute the most compelling source for the themes of otherness and hybridization. A brief analysis of some of their utterances will show what happens when they embrace Western culture and ideology, how they embody 'self' and 'other', and how postcoloniality has transformed them into sites for a dialectical process, an interaction of conflicting ideas and forces. Their utterances are, to borrow Bakhtin's term, "sociolects", or discourses that contain individual beliefs and perspectives on events. Ngugi's authorial voice disseminates different socio-ideological views from those expressed by some of the novel's characters. Nevertheless, he himself is as undermined as the major characters are – a view that Peter Nazareth's essay "The Second Homecoming: Multiple Ngugis in 'Petals of Blood'" tacitly reinforces. Nazareth observes that three different personalities coexist uneasily in the novel:

> ...The fragmented selves are not only in the tale but also in the teller ... First, there is the old Ngugi, the village Ngugi, the one who believes that people can change things by changing not only the outer world but also their inner selves, the Ngugi who rejects hypocritical Christianity ... The second Ngugi is a secular one of radical political ideas, black power, pan-African, Fanonist and socialist ... the third Ngugi [is] one struggling to be born but being resisted by the first two ... a cynical, citified Ngugi who sees things going wrong in spite of the fact that writers, intellectuals and other seers keep showing what is wrong and why, who

> sees people saying the right but doing the wrong things (122-124).

In "Discourse in the Novel", Bakhtin theorizes that "a speaking person in the novel need not necessarily be incarnated in a character", and Ngugi is a good example of what Bakhtin had in mind. Primarily through narrative irony, Ngugi offers his Marxist views that supplement and contradict those of Karega, Munira, Abdulla and Wanja. Often, Ngugi's voice is an echo within a character's voice:

> ... We can imagine [Munira encourages us] the fatal meeting between the native and the alien. The missionary had traversed the seas, the forests, armed with the desire for profit that was his faith and light and the gun that was his protection. He carried the Bible; the soldier carried the gun; the administrator and the settler carried the coin; Christianity, Commerce, Civilization: the Bible, the Coin, the Gun: Holy Trinity (Petals of Blood 88).

This alliterative description of collusion of ideologies, religion and capitalism portrays Westernization in mock-epic terms. It equates Christianity, commerce and civilization with God the father, Son and Holy Ghost, a sacrilegious analogy, and a deconstruction of colonialism as an event that violated Kenya's sacred territory (sacred because Kenya had its own gods too). In addition, the passage is not really Munira's voice. It is Ngugi's authorial voice in a dialogic relationship with Munira's and the unspoken Biblical utterance of the New Testament, that seeks to rationalize colonialism's so-called civilizing mission in religious terms. Colonialism was like "magic" and "lumps of sugar" to Ilmorogans and others, such as Munira's father (whose previous name was Waweru, before he became baptized as 'Ezekieli', the Gikuyu variant of the Biblical "Ezekiel"). Waweru's photo, in which he stands next to a gramophone with a dog's logo emblazoned with "His Master's Voice", is symbolic of his role as mouthpiece for colonial ideology.

Surprisingly, he mixes Christianity and oath-taking to help him justify his selfishness and embrace of capitalism:

> ... The property [he tells Munira] has multiplied several times since independence. My son, trust in God and you'll never put your foot wrong ... Now all that prosperity, all that hard-won freedom is threatened by Satan working through other tribes, arousing their envy. That is why this oath is necessary [i.e. to hybridize other tribes, make difference into sameness]. It is for peace and unity and it is in harmony with God's eternal design ... God helps those who help themselves. And he said that never again would He give free manna from heaven (95).

There are two voices here – Ngugi's voice ironizes Waweru's discourse on hard work, his juxtaposition of indigenous ideology and Christianity to generate a rationale for capitalism. The third, almost muffled voice at the end is, again, from the Bible, God's declaration to Moses that he will feed the starving children of Israel with food dropped from heaven. The irony is that while Waweru praises hard work as the cornerstone of capitalism God, in His socialist inclination (similar to Ngugi's), gives free food to the Israelites.

Otherness is constituted in the marginality of the characters' voices, with each attempting to convert the other's perspective of events into a minority view, to monopolize the dialogue that they are all having with their interlocutor (the reader and Ngugi himself). The characters constantly reassess their perspectives, but they are alienated from each other. Their individual voices do not represent the collective voice of the Gikuyu. Stewart Crehan supports this view when he stresses that, "for all its monologism, 'Petals of Blood' is actually riven by contradictory strategies." Crehan says Karega, Munira, Abdulla and Wanja are sites for opposing moral forces, but that Ngugi destroys his own novel's objective analysis of class formation and historical change with

sentimentality, melodrama and "by confusing economic relations with moral ones" (107). Crehan also states:

> What we have in 'Petals of Blood', however, is the complicated unraveling and interweaving of four alienated lives, whose connection with 'social events' is often verbal or potential rather than real, illustrative rather than organic. All four at various times seek some kind of union with the 'other' – whether this be the past, the future, 'the struggle', the ancestors, peasants, workers or god" (104).

Ngugi, he believes, uses history to link the subjective and the personal, to show "agitative" subjects "reliving past events". History is a tool to contrast life in postcolonial Kenya with a "nostalgic, idealized vision of the authentic culture and simple virtues of traditional agricultural life" (105).

Despite the differences between characters, they are all the same. First, they are outsiders in relation to Ilmorogans. Second, they are all affected by the triple murder. Third, the males are linked to the same prostitute and, lastly, each one embraces Westernization and clings to nativism at the same time. Each is in a binary oppositional relationship with the other (me/you, Karega/Munira), and all of them together as Kenyans constitute one entity of African otherness in relation to Europeans in the novel. For example, Wanja's Somali customer is different from the kinky German whose house is full of mirrors and Medieval artifacts, and Karega is no Karl Marx either.

Karega is a strong believer in African history and glory, like Ngugi. He is pessimistic about Kenya's postcolonial present and obsessed with a utopian dream of a new Kenya. He is like Ikem in Anthills of the Savannah; both come very close to serving as their author's mouthpiece. Karega shares the radicalism of the Nairobi lawyer whose living-room is decorated with photos of Che Guevara (the late comrade-in-arms of

Cuban leader Fidel Castro), Dedan Kimathi (Kenyan freedom-fighter) and a painting of a beggar. Karega ponders Kenya's predicament in a historical context; he compares Kenya's glorious past with its rotten present, and sees capitalism as a greedy god aided by its high priest, Christianity. The lawyer is his mentor; he tells Karega, Munira and Wanja that Western education was an ideological tool in the service of racism and European hegemony, to perpetuate the supposed inferiority of the colonized. This parallels the lawyer's own view of postcolonial intellectuals as "black zombies" (Petals 166). Karega's sociolect is a strong belief in workers' rights and solidarity, that independence would not have been achieved without the sweat of Kenya's downtrodden. He requests books from his lawyer friend, that may explain Kenya's predicament. The lawyer complies, but the history and political-science books were written by university professors, Kenyans who embody conflicting ideas and dialectical synthesis; these professors:

> ... never wanted to confront the meaning of colonialism and of imperialism. When they touched on it, it was only to describe acts of violent resistance as grisly murders; some even demanded the rehabilitation of those who sold out to the enemy during the years of struggle. One even approvingly quoted Governor Mitchell on the primitivity of Kenyan peoples and went ahead to show the historical origins of this primitivity, or what he called under-civilization. Nature had been too kind to the African, he had concluded. Karega asked himself: so the African, then, deserved the brutality of the colonizer to boot him into our civilization? There was no pride in this history: the professors delighted in abusing and denigrating the efforts of the people and their struggles in the past (199).

This passage has three interactive views: Karega's, comprador professors' and Ngugi's. He is articulating the same consciousness as Ngugi's. Karega's reported speech protests Kenyan intellectuals' complicity in embracing colonial ideology. Symbolically, he is a

site for resistance to dialectical synthesis; his and Ngugi's voice, unified, drowns Kenyan intellectuals' europhone voices. What Karega and Ngugi seem to be criticizing is the split that exists in comprador identity, because of colonial desire; being a comprador also means being disrupted, located in an intervening space between the one occupied by an other (the ex-colonizer) and another 'other' (the colonized).

Colonial desire also resides in the undermined subjectivity of Abdulla, whose patriotism is not as fiery as Karega's. Abdulla straddles colonial and postcolonial space, which makes him a site for heteroglossia, the "co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past" (Bakhtin 291). When Abdulla first arrives in Ilmorog with his donkey (which he calls his "other leg") to start his business, the villagers perceive him as another exploiter, especially considering the fact that the donkey eats too much grass and drinks lots of water (remember, Old Ilmorog is drought-ridden). Gradually, he is accepted and his shop becomes a community center for old and young. The donkey, which the elders initially wanted to offer as sacrifice for the drought, becomes the means for transportation when the delegation treks to Nairobi. As one of the major narrators, Abdulla's sociolect is shaped by his experiences as an ex-freedom fighter – which also means he is trapped by history. He occupies a position of proximity to the political events preceding Kenya's independence, that is missing with the other three. Abdulla, who used to work in a shoe factory plagued by strikes, gave up a comfortable life to join the Mau Mau which nicknamed him "Muhindi". He would, during those days, unburden his feelings of self-hatred as well as animosity toward his parents on his comrades (137). He got his socialist philosophy from reading about Chinese, Russian and North Korean peasants. During the "Journey" to Nairobi, he

maims the legs of two antelopes with a catapult that he made for some Ilmorog children – for food. This double maiming (of Abdulla himself and the antelopes) signifies the deformity in the postcolonial landscape. Abdulla is preoccupied with the past and, usually, his utterances are two distinct languages fused together: that of the resistant colonized interacting with the ex-colonizer's language. For example, this is how he reminisces about Dedan Kimathi, the revered freedom-fighter:

> ...He [Dedan] also wanted to spread our cause to the court of Haile Selassie [late Emperor of Ethiopia] and to Cairo, where Gamal Abdel Nasser [late Egyptian president] had taken the Suez Canal and later fought the British and the French ... I wanted to see this man who was but a voice, a black power, and whose military genius was recognized even by our enemy ... We spoke of him with awe and his favourite places had become important shrines in our lives. We knew him as Knight Commander of the African Empire, our Prime Minister, one who could move for fourteen days and nights without food or water ... (141).

Here Western and Kenyan perspectives of grandeur are synthesized ("Knight Commander of the African Empire", "Our Prime Minister"), resulting in a tacit recognition of the continued presence of the ex-colonizer in the postcolonial landscape. "Fourteen days and nights without food or water" echoes the imperial text, the Biblical event of Jesus Christ's temptation by Satan. Together, both images constitute a Bakhtinian, carnivalesque description of ingesting Western ideology, of adopting Western signs through eating up Western community. This sort of utterance attests to the main difference between Abdulla's and Karega's sociolect. Both never benefited from Kenya's attainment of independence; each is imprisoned by poverty and despair. However, whereas Abdulla believes everyone (peasants, elites) should benefit from independence, Karega excludes the upper class.

The most important symbol of class conflict in Petals of Blood is Godfrey Munira whose name, incidentally, is a mixture of Christian and native. Munira straddles Gikuyu and British culture, without giving up on any; yet he is ambivalent about Christianity, even though he embraces an American variation at the end of the story (running away from his father's Presbyterianism to his girlfriend's Evangelism). Munira is the main narrator of the story, but his perspective is not very reliable; his is the loudest voice and he is the most duplicitous character. When he first appears in Old Ilmorog, the villagers ridicule him. Munira, "Mwalimu" ("the teacher"), from their perspective, is an 'other' from the land of progress and wisdom. He is an exotic, cultural and ideological hybrid, located in native and Western space and trapped by history. He likes to quote Biblical phrases and aphorisms, and his zealotry for education is partly a way of paying back, making amends for not having participated in Kenya's fight for independence. His initial attempt to start a school in New Ilmorog fails; the Old woman, Nyankinua, defecates on the school's compound as a sign of resistance to Munira who, at that moment, is a symbolic object of non-ipseity. It is not surprising that he is Westernized; his father is a Presbyterian minister and his younger brother is a successful banker educated in England. His wife, Julia, is a convert to Christianity who likes to quote scripture during sexual intercourse. Thus, Munira's sociolect is heavily influenced by his family background, failed marriage and his desire to be liked. Young Munira set out on a quest to escape his father's autocracy, and New Ilmorog is a refuge from parental and marital restriction. During his student days at Siriana, he was average in academics and athletics. It is while he is detained for the triple murder that his double-voicedness becomes apparent to the reader. His name means "Stump" in Gikuyu, which symbolizes his devitalized self.

Ngugi undercuts him frequently with narrative irony. Prison serves as Munira's greatest opportunity for narrating his side of the story:

> ...he heard the chain lock click and he felt a kind of spiritual satisfaction – he remembered Peter and Paul – yes, Paul who used to be Saul – in jail hearing voices from the Lord (43).

In comparing himself to the Biblical saint, Munira assumes the role of martyr, a victim of the political and social circumstances reflected in his interrogation by Inspector Godfrey:

> ...He [Godfrey] was losing patience and Munira tried to understand: who could not feel the subterranean currents of unrest in the country? Schoolboys and girls on strike and locking up their recalcitrant, authoritarian headmasters and headmistresses in cupboards: workers downing their tools and refusing the temporary consolation of tripartite agreements; housewives holding possessions and shouting obscene slogans ... armed robbers holding up banks ...women refusing to be relegated to the kitchen and the bedroom, demanding equal places in men's former citadel of power and privilege – all these could try the nerves of those entrusted by the ruling classes of this world with maintaining man's ordained order and law (42).

First, the passage is multivocal, as Munira's unitary voice subsumes Godfrey's and Ngugi's. Second, it is ironic that Munira, who himself patronizes prostitutes, should profess an opposition to female subjugation. Third, he is a murderer and a hypocrite voicing support for law and order. It exemplifies Ngugi's flashback technique of returning to the present by way of past events related by a character. Consequently, veracity and impartiality are of great significance, but none of the narrators is believable since they are all implicated in the murder and have individual agendas, the most prominent being winning over the reader and Ngugi. From Munira's standpoint, Inspector Godfrey is an 'other' from Nairobi, a policeman who ignores differences, as he himself confesses (having served colonial and postcolonial regimes).

Munira is co-narrator, with Wanja, of Part One, a technique that dialogizes two different sociolects based on gender. Nevertheless, the novel presents a predominantly male view of Kenya. Munira's education mission in New Ilmorog is a form of colonial desire that is reminiscent of Defoe's Robinson Crusoe's manifest destiny and colonizing impulses. Munira is afraid that his boss, Mzigo, would "...transfer me back to places and people I had left behind, denying me the challenge of nation-building in remote Ilmorog, my new-found Kingdom" (54). His reliance on women for personal sustainance is tantamount to parasitism; he is the other vulture, a sexual one, a mirror image of the political vultures in the story (symbolized by the name of the Ilmorog M.P., Nderi wa Riera, which means "vulture" in Gikuyu). Munira constructs a different social reality from the other characters. He goes through a process of what Bhabha calls "miscognition where each point of identification is always a partial, double repetition of the 'otherness' of the self" (The Location of Culture 97), and "only watched, feeling slightly left out, an outsider at the gate of somebody else's house" (Petals, 207). He fails to mention his other role as participant, insider, the main voice that is "a mixture of an autobiographical confessional and some kind of prison notes" (190). His claim to hear voices, during his detention, is a clever attempt at creating vocal confusion and of drowning the univocal, other portrait of the murderer. In addition, the reader cannot forget the other real voices of the two detainees who robbed the New Ilmorog branch of the African Economic Bank. In sum, Munira is undermined not only by multivocality in his rendition of events, but also by his embodiment of binaries: husband/adulterer; lover/hater (of his dead sister, Mukami and father respectively); rival/friend (he competes with Karega for Wanja's

affections, but cooperates with him in matters of education), and an object of respect/disrespect (i.e. teacher and alcoholic).

Wanja, the only female major character is, like Munira, undermined by multivocality in her utterances as well as her embodiment of binary, oppositional entities: prostitute/mother; manipulatress/healer; exploiter/exploited; city-girl/country healer; insider/outsider. As Kenneth Little correctly says, she has "two personalities which, like those of Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll, are in conflict with each other. One of Wanja's personalities apparently finds satisfaction in the simple joys of village life ... When her second personality takes charge, Wanja exchanges the rustic tranquility for the noise, canned music and fights of a beer-hall in the nearest township" (140). Wanja's socio-ideological view of postcolonial Kenya is foregrounded on material success and sex. She was a tomboy at school, a symbol of cross-gendering social behavior and cultural dualism, and she is a site for the conflation of urban and rural practices. Her cynical dictum concerning material success is propounded in a carnivalesque manner: "this world [she tells Karega] ... this Kenya ... this Africa knows only one law. You eat somebody or you are eaten. You sit on somebody or somebody sits on you" (Petals 291). Her name is a derivation of "Wanjiku" in the Gikuyu language which means, "mother of the nine clans" and also "stranger", "outsider". Her secret, the real reason for coming to Ilmorog in the first place, was to consult a medicine man to help her become fertile, and to have a second child to replace the one who died. She is also on a quest in search of her natal origins, to see where her beloved father was born (Ilmorog). Her father was tainted by Westernization. He fought for Britain during World War II. As a young girl, she would sit on his lap while he recounted stories about "Italians, Germans and

Japanese" (231) and she in turn would read and spell Gikuyu words. Metaphorically, it was an attempt at childhood indoctrination that laid the foundation for her adult embrace of Europeanization. The irony is that her father did not participate in Kenya's liberation struggle; he even demanded that his wife sever ties with her sister, because her husband was a Mau Mau sympathizer. Another irony is that Wanja's paternal grandfather was hanged by the British (also as a Mau Mau sympathizer). The point is that her childhood was plagued by domestic quarrels and ideological conflicts that left scars on her psyche – which she took to New Ilmorog, where all her narrating occurs.

Ngugi brilliantly combines Wanja's narration of her scholastic experiences with Kenya's fight for independence in a soccer metaphor:

> "...His name was Ritho. He and I were in the same class at Kinoo Primary School. Girls can be cruel. I used to read his letters to the other girls. We would giggle and laugh at him ... But his gifts of pencils and sweets – these I did not tell to anybody. It was all childish and a game that amused us. And then we were late in school one Friday. We were watching a football match between our school and Rungiri. We called them KADU and we called ourselves KANU, which they resented. KANU lost to KADU. Then he talked about Uhuru [independence]. He said there would be increased chances, especially for poor people ... his ambition was to design and build a bridge over a road or over a river ... But boys were always more confident about the future than us girls ... It was as if we knew that no matter what efforts we put into our studies, our road led to the kitchen and to the bedroom" (37).

This utterance fuses politics, athletics, and sex; female and male perspectives combine in a portrait of competing interests and disempowerment. The implied message is that there is no difference between coloniality and postcoloniality, from a female perspective because both define women as inferior and as objects of pleasure. The road is a chronotope connoting progress and regress – in a sexual context. "Pencils" can also

represent "phallus", and "sweets" is double-worded to mean "treats" as well as sexual pleasure (bearing in mind the fact that Wanja first became pregnant at school through Kimeria, one of the murder victims). Worth noting is the implication of a "game" as a trope for the unseriousness, or frivolity with which business is conducted in Kenya. Chris uses it in a similar fashion in describing Sam's relationship with his cabinet in Anthills of the Savannah. Incidentally, the strongest evidence of intertextuality, vis a vis Petals of Blood and Achebe's novel, is the elevation of both Wanja and Beatrice to goddess-like status. Abdulla's song of progress – "I will sing you a song of a town/And of Wanja who started it" (264) – gives credit to a female prostitue for transforming Old Ilmorog into New Ilmorog. Similarly, Achebe delineates Beatrice as the future savior of Kangan, who rejuvenates the landscape after its male characters have destroyed it.

Achebe's novel belongs to the same corpus as his A Man of the People, with similar themes of political corruption. He wrote Anthills of the Savannah after A Man of the People. In A Man of the People, the civilian government which succeeded British colonization is toppled by the military, and Anthills begins with a military dictatorship aided by a few friends. A Man of the People is about what happens when the responsibility for nation-building is handed over to the colonized by the ex-colonizer.

HYBRIDITY AND NATION-BUILDING

Anthills of the Savannah is about the failure of the task of nation-building by hybrid selves. All of Achebe's novels, according to Robin Ikegami, deal with "the complex and often problematic relation between knowledge, power and storytelling ... Unlike his

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previous novels, 'Anthills' features characters who are concerned neither with negotiating a way between black society and white government (as in 'Things Fall Apart', 'No Longer at Ease', and 'Arrow of God') nor with making a direct transition from colonialism to self-government (as in 'A Man of the People'):

> Instead, these characters are occupied with finding a way of establishing and maintaining a successful form of postcolonial self-government. Rather than trying to fill in the skeletal structure of government left by colonialism, they attempt to construct a new government out of their history. The relation between knowledge and power in 'Anthills', then, is particularly problematic, for the characters have a great deal of various kinds of knowledge, and they believe that they have a certain amount of power as well ... They are almost perpetually in a state of confusion because the extent of their knowledge and power is always in question, not only in their minds but in the minds of others as well" (65-66).

What Ikegami calls "various kinds of knowledge" is, in my view, different sociolects that the characters, as witnesses, articulate. Consequently, Chris, Ikem, Sam and Beatrice are 'others', one to another, in a socio-ideological framework. They are the same because they all straddle Westernization, Anglicism and nativism. Their sameness-in-difference is what happens when Kangan culture is invaded by Westernization.

One important difference between Anthills and A Man of the People is that the former uses T.S. Eliot's wasteland motif to help paint Kangan's postcolonial landscape, but the latter does not apply it to Nigerian society. Another difference is that, while Anthills is a fictional rendition of Achebe's concerns in The Trouble with Nigeria (his other work that criticizes political corruption), A Man of the People dispenses with fictive reality, in its bold and overt critique of Nigerian society. Anthills of the Savannah, which portrays Kangan's body politic as duplicitous, open to multiple interpretations is, in the

words of Neil Kortenaar, "a valuable locus for studying the interplay of village, ethnic unit, nation-state, and race in the configuration of identity in Africa", and Achebe is "so identified with 'Igboness' that his style has been called an Igbo style in contrast to the Yoruba style of Wole Soyinka" (59). Kortenaar sees Kangan as similar to other African countries that are "defined in terms of colonial borders that were originally drawn by the British", while Abazon is a "metonymical representative of traditional Africa" and a "cultural nation" that is different from a "political nation", which is what Kangan represents (60). This means the novel treats subjectivity as a text, an inscription of the social economic and political landscape. Postcolonial fiction habitually contextualizes narrators as well as characters, and Achebe's novel is no exception. As postcolonial discourse, it deals with cultural fusion and internalization of Western values, but it is also a critique of certain assumptions of both center and periphery, through the decentering and de-marginalizing of postcolonial subjectivity.

Anne McClintock suggests that, because the term "postcolonial" is historically voided (like "signifier", "the other", "the subject"), and since "post" confers the prestige of history on colonialism, we should let "post-colonialism" connote "multiplicity" (293). She believes the term "postcolonial" is paradoxical because, "as in colonial discourse, the movement forward in space is backwards in time" (292), backward being equated with black degeneracy, while forward becomes synonymous with white progress. In light of her comments, Anthills is definitely a paradoxical text; it is a site for the return of colonialism (in the guise of Westernization) "at the moment of its disappearance" (independence). It theorizes a "decentering of history in hybridity, syncreticism, multi-dimensional time" while at the same time being committed to linear time and progress

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(McClintock 292). This means native characters, in postcolonial writings, displace Europeans (i.e. their position of privilege), and black identity is construed according to assumptions of Western personhood, based on historical stereotypes and lower expectations which are foregrounded on a dialectic of mind/body, and an epistemology of appearance/reality. McClintock is wrong to equate postcolonial with colonial discourse. Colonial discourse, in my opinion, is a tool of hegemony that perpetuates cultural, historical and racial differences; it racializes culture. I also believe Postcolonial discourse is a tool of resistance to hegemony; it acknowledges differences, but tries to mediate them.

Anthills of the Savannah is a verbal structure of hybridity, and seeks to erase tensions that evolved out of British colonization. It portrays Kangan as fissured, a struggle between the capital, Bassa and Abazon. It focuses on the nation/state in order to examine identity, ideology and epistemology, mimics the colonial situation, and presents independence not as an act of disruption, but as a continuation of Westernization. Like the ant-ridden Savannah, Kangan is a wasteland inhabited by parasitical, fragmented subjectivities who are culturally disrupted. The state is an experiment in hybridization, with its elites making a mockery of Western democracy. Chris, Ikem, Beatrice and Sam constitute the affiliated power structure that initially ruled the nation/state, which later splits as their friendship fades. Achebe explores the relationship between English and Nigerian culture, and tries to vindicate Igbo culture. His novel is polemical in its advocacy of decentering Kangan and eradicating its dichotomy – the split between nation and state and the cultural dualism that it harbors. Anthills uses sex, religion and ritual (Beatrice's baptismal ceremony) to achieve unity among classes and linguistic structures;

it is an agenda of negating difference and constructing a national identity by locating meaning in Igbo collectivity. Abazon, the cultural and indigenous enclave is a symbolic alternative to the pseudo-Westernized Bassa whose upper class is "almost the same but not white" (Bhabha, "Of Mimicry" 130). These elites clamor for the most comfortable spot in the wasteland. For example, Sam's Commissioner for Home Affairs, Prof. Okong, unabashedly declares: "I go to prepare a place for you, gentlemen ... But rest assured I will keep the most comfortable cell for myself" (Anthills 9), a twisted derivation of Jesus Christ's promise to his disciples of a place for them in Heaven! Okong is as sycophantic of Sam as Sam is contemptuous of him. Another sycophant is the Attorney-General, whose apotheosis of Sam is grounded on racial and cultural difference, and a valorization of otherness:

> ...We have no problem worshipping a man like you. Honestly, I don't. You went to Lord Lugard College [named after the architect of the colonial policy of 'divide and rule' in Nigeria] where half your teachers were Englishmen. Do you know, the nearest white men I saw in my school were an Indian and two Pakistanis. Do you know, your Excellency, that I was never taught by a real white man until I went to read law at Exeter ... During my first year in Britain I saw Welsh Rarebit on the menu one fine day and I rubbed my hands together and my mouth began to water because I thought I was going to eat real bush-meat from the forest of Wales (22).

Here we have power located in otherness, in a carnivalesque description that fuses Kangan and Welsh diet ("bush-meat from Wales"), in a display of unconscious desire to be European. The Attorney-General, in constructing otherness in terms of race, is ascribing positive elements to it and differentiating it from negative alterity. Appiah would, doubtlessly, take issue with such an interpretation and call the Attorney-General's utterance a postcolonial critique (Achebe's) of "alteritism", "the construction and

celebration of oneself as Other", and "the sort of Manicheanism that makes Africa 'a body' (nature) against Europe's juridical reality, culture" (155-156).

As praxis, Anthills of the Savannah foregrounds politics on pleasure and creature comforts that biologize Kangan. In the political landscape, the visual and concrete are as important as what is internalized and conceptualized. The citizens of Kangan view inferiority as the exclusive preserve of the marginal, while superiority resides in a Euro-center. For example, Abazonians are obsequious concerning others in positions of authority including native son Ikem, who is more important to them not as a crusader for the masses, but as editor of the National Gazette, an insider in Kangan's politics. Ikem is a "teller of time", a metaphorical "bush fowl" or prophet for the Abazonian delegation. It is ironic that this delegation stays in "Harmony Hotel" – a pun on "money" that plays on "corruption", signifying Abazon's desire to be in "harmony" with Bassa and shed its otherness.

An examination of otherness must include some analysis of the utterances of the major characters. Chris, Ikem, Sam, Beatrice and Mad Medico are narrators as well as characters, in addition to Achebe's authorial presence. Kalu Ogbaa says Achebe's narrative voice is that of an artist and conscientious objector to the criminal war waged against the people of Kangan, in the form of bad governance. This, says Ogbaa, is an example of Achebe's literary activism:

> ...Instead of using an omniscient reporter or the I-narrator to tell his tale, Achebe uses Witnesses who happen to be some of the major characters to do so... The political crime whose fallout the entire novel explores and dramatizes has already taken place. From time to time, though, allusions are made to that crime, and the suspected criminals, as it were, are called in as witnesses to say what they know about it. The effect of this technical device is that the

> characters, who are also members of His Excellency's cabinet are saboteurs [i.e. a splitting and a joining on the same locus, dissention and collegiality in the cabinet, difference as sameness] (131).

Their conflicting views are relatively dialogic. Incidentally, their roles as narrators and characters constitute a hybrid feature of novelistic construction. Each is a split self of native and Western other, struggling with alterity and transcendence, which makes all of them subjectivities in crisis. In an earlier chronotope (colonial era, London), they were very close friends but now, a different chronotope (independence, Kangan) means fissure, an asymmetrical, ethical relation (disharmony) as each struggles to go, "toward the Other where he is truly other" (Levinas 88). They are never done with each other, as they share responsibility for success and failure. Each embodies a socio-ideological perspective that differs from the others', in a framework of dialogized heteroglossia. In the words of Bakhtin, they "mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and [are] interrelated dialogically" (292). Even though his voice is seldom heard, Sam's presence is continuously felt in the story; his perspective is subsumed by Chris' Beatrice's, Ikem's and Mad Medico's.

Novelistic dialogism, in Anthills of the Savannah, consists of multivocality embedded in univocality, different voices within one voice, the mixing of characters' intentions with others' (including Achebe's and the readers, as interlocutors). The same thing happens in Ngugi's Petals of Blood, as we have seen. Achebe, Ngugi and their readers may not share similar ideology – a possibility that enhances the heteroglot differences in both novels, because of their different chronotopes (Nigeria and Kenya won independence at different times, and Igbos are not the same as Gikuyus). Still,

heteroglossia, in both novels, is the same; it "represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past" (Bakhtin 291).

UNDERMINED SUBJECTIVITIES

The utterances of Chris, Ikem, Beatrice, Sam and Mad Medico are good sources for such "coexistence of socio-ideological contradictions". They are double-voiced; each's utterance contains two individual consciousnesses and two axiological belief systems competing on the same speech's territory. Most prominent of all the utterances are Chris' since, strategically, his testimony is the first that the reader hears:

> "You're wasting everybody's time, Mr. Commissioner for Information [says Sam to Chris]. I will not go to Abazon. Finish! Kabisa! Any other business?"
>
> "As your Excellency wishes. But ..."
>
> "But me no buts, Mr. Oriko! ... Why do you find it so difficult to swallow my ruling. On anything?"
>
> "I am so sorry, Your Excellency. But I have no difficulty swallowing and digesting your rulings."
>
> For a full minute or so the fury of his eyes lay on me. Briefly our eyes had been locked in combat. Then I had lowered mine to the shiny table-top in ceremonial capitulation ... I have thought of all this as a game that began innocently enough and then went suddenly strange and poisonous ... And so it begins to seem to me that this thing probably never was a game, that the present was there from the very beginning only I was too blind or too busy to notice ... Why then do I go on with it now that I can see. Simple inertia, maybe. I am not thinking so much about him as about my colleagues, eleven intelligent, educated men who let this happen to them ... the cream of our society and the hope of the black race (Anthills 1-2).

This passage presents government as combat, a twisted sport; it has three belief systems: Chris', Sam's and the perspective of the general populace. It is also double-worded ("But" echoes 'butt', as in 'don't butt heads with me'). Sam's orders are like food; they are to be eaten and digested, and this makes his governing process carnivalesque. Chris is a spectator and participant in the political drama, and his ambivalence is parodied. When he tells Sam that he has "no difficulty swallowing and digesting" his orders, he symbolically allows the President to transgress his body and make him a co-conspirator. Achebe, through his narrative-ironizing voice, presents his own consciousness of Chris as a complicit hypocrite. Achebe reminds the other interlocutor, the reader, that the chronotope has not changed, that it is the same moment and the same locus despite Chris' attempt to conflate history and the present (i.e. pretending that he did, and does not know why he became a member of Sam's government). The third utterance belongs to the masses who deify the elites. Thus, Chris' perception of himself as a hypnotized follower, and his projection as the pan-African champion inhabiting an other chronotope ("the hope of the black race"), the future, a post-postcolonial time and space, is undermined.

The second witness, Ikem Osodi, is also undermined. Earlier in his testimony, he offers this view of Sam:

> Worshipping a dictator is such a pain in the ass. It wouldn't be so bad if it was merely a matter of dancing upside down on your head. With practice anyone could learn to do that ... It seems that when Chris was last at the palace the Big Shot had said quite categorically that he would pay a visit to Abazon ... But in the meantime the Big Shot has had a brief snooze and on waking up has begun to see the world differently (41).

Standard English and American slang ("pain in the ass", "Big Shot", "brief snooze") collide in Ikem's testimony. This linguistic collision reflects the competition between

Anglo culture and a new, global one for dominance in the postcolonial sphere. Fredric Jameson, in his "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism", sees global capitalism as a "first world" cultural imperialism that threatens all third-world cultures. Jameson uses "third world" in a descriptive, non-ideological sense to argue that there is no such thing as a "centered subject" or a "unified personality" (67). The essay, a masterly exercise in orientalism, posits that Western civilization is just as dichotomous (split between the public and the private, the political and the libidinal) as the so-called third world. I agree. Ikem is neither a "centered subject", nor a "unified personality". He belongs to varied collectivities: upper class, public servant, friend (and later enemy) of the Head of State, male, union sympathizer and Abazonian. His ideological self conflicts with his affiliated self; he says that the proletariat is just as bad as the politicians, and his support for what Sam calls "Abazonian agitators", in their refusal to back Sam's bid for a lifetime presidency, lands Ikem in trouble. Ikem is an idealist, different from Chris, who is a pragmatist. According to Ikem, the cardinal sin committed by the government is its lack of spiritual and moral affinity with the poor. He is also cynical toward the masses; Chris says he is a romantic who has "no solid contact with the ordinary people of Kangan" (Anthills 36). Although the people and elders of Abazon respect and adore Ikem, he never attends their meetings, weddings and naming ceremonies – and yet he accuses others of not having moral affinity! He enjoys being "worshipped" by Abazonians and students at the university; he is a "Big Shot" like Sam, and he too will wake up one day to realize that conditions have changed, that Sam now considers him an enemy of the state.

Sam's "major flaw", Ikem suggests, is his extreme anglophilia: "All he ever wanted was to do what was expected of him especially by the English whom he admired sometimes to the point of foolishness" (44-45). The young Sam abandoned his ambition to become a doctor simply because his headmaster John Williams, an Englishman, told him that the Army was "a career for gentlemen". Sam picked up his favorite expression ("it's not done") and perfect English accent during his military studies at Sandhurst, the famous British War College; he also loves cricket, an English sport:

> He was fascinated by the customs of the English, especially their well-to-do classes and enjoyed playing at their foibles. When he told me [Ikem] about his elegant pipe which he had spent a whole morning choosing in a Mayfair shop I could see that he was not taking himself seriously at all. And therefore I had no reason to do so (45).

Still, Sam bought the pipe anyway, which means Achebe is using irony here, as a split discourse, to subvert Sam's cultural identity. Sam is the most culturally hybridized character in the novel. He is rumored to favor the company of fashionable people (Americans and Europeans). The menu, at his parties, is usually a mixture of European and Kangan (e.g. shrimp cocktail and "Jollof" rice, cheese and English crackers, plus fried plantains). State television for which, as military dictator, he is completely responsible, is replete with American programs. Sam's presence is felt throughout the story, even though he speaks less, and his voice filters through Chris', Ikem's, Beatrice' and Mad Medico's, including Achebe's authorial voice. Still, Sam's minimal utterances contribute to the differentiated speech and testimonial framework of the novel. Whenever he speaks, he never fails to use, as reference, England or America, the neo-colonial center. For example, in discussing with Professor Okong whether or not to receive the delegation from Abazon, Sam suggests:

> 'Tell them if you like, that I am on the telephone with the President of the United States of America or the Queen of England. Peasants are impressed by that kind of thing, you know ...' (16).

Without a doubt, English is the language Sam plans to use in his chat with the U.S. President and British Queen. English, Bhabha suggests, is a metaphor of cultural difference that "emerges at points of social crisis, and the questions of identity that it raises are agonistic; identity is claimed either from a position of marginality or in an attempt at gaining the center: in both senses, ex-centric" (The Location of Culture 177). There is also no doubt that, if he chooses to address the Abazon delegation, he will not speak to them in English; he will use Igbo or pidgin. This simple lie that will excuse Sam from his official duty has cultural implications. He prefers dealing with the ex-colonizer and the titular head of global capitalism. Metaphorically, he wants to talk his way to what he perceives as the geopolitical and cultural center; he wants to demarginalize Kangan by decentering Abazon at the same time, and this amounts to hybridization, an act of splitting and joining in the same body politic. Sam's reference to "peasants" is carnivalesque in mixing the lowly with the mighty; he sees himself the way he expects peasants to regard him – as the equal of Western heads of state. It is an attempt at using transcendence to create an identity. Later, he uses the same America and England to stress Kangan's different politics, when Chris tenders his resignation:

> 'Resignation! Ha ha ha ha ha. Where do you think you are? Westminster or Washington D.C.? Come on! This is a military government in a backward West African State called Kangan ...'
>
> 'We wouldn't be so backward [Chris replies] if we weren't so bent on remaining so ....'

> 'Some day you will have a chance to change all that when you become the boss. Right now this boss here won't accept resignation ... this same boss has allowed you and others to call the shots.' (133)

For Sam, resignation is associated with otherness. Three consciousnesses are juxtaposed in this exhange. First, Achebe ironizes Sam's use of America and England to help justify his (Sam's) dictatorship. Second, Sam confesses that he has not modernized Kangan, that it is backward. Third, Chris blames Kangan's lack of progress on Sam's postcolonial gaze backwards, his relocation in colonial space. Thus, "backward" is double-worded, with two different meanings; Sam uses it to convey underdevelopment, which Chris accepts – with the addition that it connotes an obsession with the past. The "we" in Chris' "we wouldn't be so backward ..." is actually a 'you' that places him in an I/You relation with Sam. Lastly, Sam mixes two social languages in one utterance – standard English and American slang. It is a habit that the other major characters share, except Mad Medico.

Mad Medico, an Englishman who has gone native, represents the continued presence of the ex-colonizer in Kangan. Elewa, Ikem's girlfriend, says Mad Medico is weird. He loves graffiti and has a few on the walls of the heart-patient ward in the hospital with the words: "Blessed are the poor in heart for they shall see God"; "To the Twin Cities of Sodom and Gonorrhea" (in the ward that houses patients suffering from veneral diseases). His idiosyncracy, use of the Bible to make fun of sick people, is symbolic of the postcolonial landscape being construed as a site for abnormalities. These distasteful inscriptions got Mad Medico in trouble; he was almost deported. His friendship with Sam (whom he calls "my wonder boy") got him off the hook; this relationship makes Mad Medico the equal of Chris, Ikem and Beatrice in the context of

Kagan as a state foregrounded on affiliation. Mad Medico's real name is John kent, and he is not a doctor; he is an administrator. He is the only one in the novel to call Sam by his first name and that incenses Beatrice:

> "Tell me, would you walk up to your Queen and say, 'Hi, Elizabeth'?"
>
> "To hell, I wouldn't. But why are all you fellows so bent on turning this sunshine paradise into bleak Little England? Sam is no bloody queen. I tell you he was such a nice fellow in those days. He had a wholesome kind of innocence about him. He was ... what shall I say? He was morally and intellectually intact – a kind of virgin, if you get my meaning. Not in its prudish sense, of course. He was more assured, knew a lot more than his fellow English officers and damn well spoke better English" (54).

Mad Medico's speech contains two contrary perspectives: a postcolonial, expatriate renunciation of empire is juxtaposed with a colonial, orientalist view of Kangan as a "sunshine paradise" through the double-voiced discourse of his cockney dialect. His settler voice ridicules the cockney dissemination of imperialist dogma namely, that all knowledge resides in the home country, the seat of the ex-empire ("knew a lot more than his fellow English officers"). The settler voice, while renouncing allegiance to England, echoes a colonial stereotype of colonized people as incapable of mastering another language. Mad Medico's self is undermined by his affiliation with a head of state who wants to remake his African country in the cultural image of "bleak Little England".

Another example of such dialogized consciousness, of the colonial undermining the postcolonial occurs in Mad Medico's introduction of Dick, another Englishman who is visiting Kangan: "A white man in the tropics needs to see someone fresh from his tribe to remind him that his colour is perhaps not as wrong, and patchy as it may seem" (51). Characters like Mad Medico are common in anglophone literature; their role not only

symbolizes the ex-colonizer's continued presence, but also his reluctance to abandon condescending, racist attitudes toward the ex-colonized. Appiah, in this context, talks of the "biologizing" of ideology (and hence, culture), that race is a metonym for culture:

> ... "race" is particularly distressing for those of us who take culture seriously. For, where race works – in places where "gross differences" of morphology are correlated with "subtle differences" of temperament, belief, and intention – it works as an attempt at metonym for culture, and it does so only at the price of biologizing what 'is' culture, ideology (In My Father's House 45).

Relating Appiah's statement to Mad Medico's introduction means Mad Medico is using skin color to re-affirm his hybridity, that he is simultaneously the same as, but different from Dick. The tropics have colored him with shades of brown, without essentially changing him into a Kangan. Two histories (colonization and independence), two cultural realities (Kangan and England), and two belief systems (Westernized Kangan elites are fakes; all Englishmen are racists) compete in Mad Medico's utterances:

> " ... You should have heard the names they called me because I was so naïve as to try to cheer up some dreary wards in their blasted hospital. Imperialist! White racist! Red Neck! .... Look outside. What do you see? Sunshine! Life! Vitality. It says to you: Come out and play. Make love! Live! And these dusky imitators of 'petit beourgeois' Europe corrupted at Sandhurst and London School of Economics expect me to come here and walk about in a bowler hat and rolled umbrella like a fucking banker on Cheapside. Christ" (53).

This tirade is rife with alterity. Mad Medico perceives himself the way he expects the people of Kangan to see him. He exteriorizes English subjectivity and projects it against Kangan subjectivity, which means that he is a character in perpetual crisis. His utterance, in Levinas' words, "presupposes a subordinating of knowledge, objectification, to the encounter with the other" (Levinas, 97). It is an utterance that is replete with reflexivity;

Mad Medico looks at himself with English spectacles, rejects what he sees, but then goes on to attribute or credit others with the creation of such an unflattering image. Again, as Levinas reiterates, "I am to the other what the other is to me" (100). Mad Medico is one of two characters that direct the reader's attention to the fact that Kangan's politics is libidinized. There are binary oppositions of the collective/private and the political/sexual: "A nice young fellow comes all the way from the warmth of Africa to the inhospitable climate ... the best I could do was fix him up with a warm friendly girl to cheer him up" (55). Sam, who embodies Kangan, was violated by the imperial center, sexually, so he was not even chaste, culturally, when he staged his coup and took over the reins of government.

The other character, through whose eyes we see Kangan's libidinized landscape, is Beatrice. She embodies dualism and is Achebe's solution for what ails Kangan. Romanus Muoneke calls her "the new woman" in postcolonial Africa who "combines in her nature the old and the new, the traditional and the modern. She also has the power to redeem ... Her modern self operates side by side with her prophetic self ... In her dual role, she, more than any of the other characters in the novel, represents the link between Africa's traditional past and its Westernized present – a redemptive meld which, Achebe insists, is at the heart of the resolution of Nigerian identity" (147-148). Achebe calls her "priestess of the unknown god". She "deserves the title of priestess not only for her passionate love-making – an indication of her liberation from her puritanical indoctrination – but also for her jealous regard for, and her militancy in defending, the dignity and honour of her country and its culture" (Sharma, 96). She vainly admits to Chris, "As a matter of fact I do sometimes feel like Chielo in the novel, the priestess and

prophetess of the Hills and the Caves" (Anthills 105). "Chielo" also appears in Achebe's first novel, Things Fall Apart. This means Achebe is entrusting Beatrice the responsibility of preserving Igbo religious tradition. However, the fact is, Beatrice is ignorant of Igbo history:

> Beatrice Nwanyibuife did not know these traditions and legends ... She was born ... into a world apart; was baptized and sent to schools which made much about the English and the Jews and the Hindu and practically everybody else but hardly put in a word for her forebears and the divinities with whom they had evolved. So she came to barely knowing who she was. Barely, we say though, because she did carry a vague sense more acute at certain critical moments than others of being two different people (96).

She does not know that she is a descendant of the goddess Idemili, "Pillar of Water", the link between earth and sky; her Western education hid this fact from her and suppressed her self-awareness of her symbolic importance in Igbo cosmology. Her Igbo name, "Nwanyibuife", which means "a female is also something" neutralizes the assumed gender superiority of the male characters. Her native village between Omambala and Iguedo, the seat of Idemili, has a river that once saved the area from drought. This river (Orimili) was later renamed the Niger by Europeans (94). Thus, Beatrice represents the fusion of Igbo history and folklore, the displacement of one indigenous sign by another ("Orimili" is the river of sustenance, while "Niger" is the waterway for European traffic, the means through which foreign ideology penetrated Igboland). It is therefore appropriate that she, as the sole survivor among the original four friends, symbolizes hope and reconciliation in Kangan's future.

Chapter III

The Context of Gender: p'Bitek's "Song of Lawino", "Song of Ocol" and Nwapa's One is Enough

Okot p'Bitek's "Song of Lawino" (1966) and "Song of Ocol" (1970) are poems which rely totally on the oral techniques of the Acoli tribe of Uganda. These poems, which could be called short novels in verse form, are not at all influenced by Western poetic tradition, despite p'Bitek's Western education and exposure to British and American culture. In fact, one might make the case that it is because of such exposure that he was able to write a poetic critique of Western influences on Africans; the poems create an African identity. Okot p'Bitek (1931 – 1982) received his higher education from Bristol, Wales and Oxford Universities. He lectured extensively in East Africa, before becoming a visiting Fellow at the Universities of Iowa and Texas, Austin. He died at the young age of fifty-one, suddenly, while doing research at Makerere University in his home country of Uganda. He is most famous for "Song of Lawino" and "Song of Ocol", but he also published "Song of Prisoner" and "Song of Malaya" (1971), two essays entitled "African Religions in Western Scholarship" (1971), "Religion of the Central Luo" (1971) and a book, Africa's Cultural Revolution (1973).

Flora Nwapa (1931 – 1993) wrote novels, poems, children's literature and short stories. The novels are: Efuru (1966), Idu (1970), Never Again (1975), One is Enough (1981) and Women Are Different (1986). Her prose poems, "Cassava Song and Rice Song" were published in 1986. She also wrote Emeka: The Driver's Guard (1972), Mammy Water (1979), My Tana Colouring Book (1979), My Animal Number Book (1979), The Miracle Kittens (1980), Journey to Space (1980) and The Adventures of Deke (1980), all of them children's books, and two sets of short stories: This Is Lagos

and Other Stories (1971) and Wives at War and Other Stories (1975). She also left a manuscript, The Lake Goddess when she died in 1993. Thus, she was not only prolific; she was also versatile, writing for adults as well as the very young.

Okot p'Bitek and Flora Nwapa write against a postcolonial, Anglophone canon that focuses exclusively on alterity and hybridity in the cultural and ideological contexts of collision between the West and Africa, a Euro-center and native periphery. Both authors acknowledge such clash, but go further to include tensions that exist inside the periphery. Obioma Nnaemeka, in his article entitled "From Orality to Writing: African Women Writers and the (Re) Inscription of Womanhood," welcomes such thematic departure. He thinks it is due not only to a recognition of the importance of gender and history, in constructing African identity, but also to a conscious denial of the existence of a heterogeneous African female identity:

> How can one justify or excuse the conspiracy of African writers, male as well as female, in erasing that other African woman – that independent, strong, and admirable woman who is celebrated in our oral traditions ... Marginal discourses have often presented the periphery as the opposite of the center, as a monolithic entity that serves as the "other" of the center. This homogenizing and isolating strategy legitimizes both difference and sameness – difference between the center and the margin but sameness at each end of the continuum ... (141).

"Song of Lawino" and "Song of Ocol" reflect p'Bitek's cultural agenda of re-affirming the identity of the Acoli. Although the poems deal specifically with one Ugandan tribe, they are also applicable to the entire Anglophone postcolonial landscape. He himself wrote that his goal was to make Africa "discover her true self ... redefine all cultural terms according to her own interests [and] continue the economic and cultural revolution until she refuses to be led by the nose by foreigners" (Africa's vii), an agenda

that Chinweizu et al recognize in their book, Toward The Decolonization of African Literature. The authors acknowledge that p'Bitek's poems further the traditions of his East African audience and promote the African consciousness of such audience (14). They consider the poems "the best rounded single work of African poetry in English today", and praise it for being relevant to contemporary problems plaguing Africa and for its rich, authentic imagery (195).

TRADITION VS. MODERNISM

Westernization is the predominant theme of "Song of Lawino" and "Song of Ocol", two long poems that function as one debate between an Acoli wife and her husband. The poems also fuse issues of colonialism with those of gender. The wife, Lawino, accuses the husband, Ocol, of being too Western in his behavior and thinking, and of neglecting tribal ways. Okot p'Bitek says of "Song of Lawino" that it is:

> A big laugh by this village girl called Lawino, laughing at modern man and modern woman in Uganda. She thinks that the educated folk are spoiled, in the sense that they don't belong, they don't enjoy fully the culture of the people of Uganda, and she thinks that if only these educated people could stop a little bit and look back into the village they would find a much richer life altogether (Pieterse 149-150).

Ocol replies that Lawino is too traditional and incapable of accommodating change. The poems can be approached as separate parts of one novel, with only two characters whose voices are dialogized. Sometimes they shout at each other and, at other times, each quietly advances serious arguments to bolster their individual perspective. Lawino repetitiously catalogs the habits that she wants Ocol to give up. She says that she is not

like white women, cannot cook on an electric stove, or dance cheek-to-cheek with men as white women do in night clubs:

> It is true, Ocol
> I cannot dance the ball-room dance
> Being held so tightly
> I feel ashamed,
> Being held so tightly in public
> I cannot do it,
> It looks shameful to me! ("Song of Lawino" 44)

These lines contain desire for a different kind of entertainment; Lawino would really like to dance in a ball-room. She contrasts European with Ugandan women, but takes great care to praise Ugandan women's dress, coiffure and dances in the village square. She does not admire educated, sophisticated city-dwellers like Clementine who:

> ... fry their hair
> In boiling oil
> As if it were locusts,
> And the hair sizzles
> It cries aloud in sharp pain
> As it is pulled and stretched (54).

Lawino prefers women who adorn their hair in the true Acoli style, put on red string-skirts and use red "Simsim" oil to make their skins glisten. When they wear black skirts, they do their hair with "akuku" (a native ingredient). Lawino's song is loaded with proverbs (e.g. "let no one uproot the pumpkin"), metaphors that originate from Uganda's flora and fauna which she delivers in "an informal, humorous, witty, unvarnished style of great vigor" (Chinweizu 279). "Song of Lawino" and "Song of Ocol" are distinct from written poetry, because p'Bitek relies heavily on traditional songs:

> The mixture of humor, satire, and lament ... reflect Acoli oral poetic forms, which are interwoven with proverbs, similes, metaphors, symbols, and other figures of speech to constitute a powerful commentary on the social, political, religious, and economic situation in post-independence

> Uganda and by extension, in the entire Third World (Okumu 65).

Lawino is located in transcultural space; she celebrates Acoli tradition, but is trapped by Westernization, which she struggles to repress. "Song of Lawino" satirizes Westernization, but defends Acoli culture. I agree with Charles Okumu, when he says that Lawino's criticism of Ocol is "Two-pronged: she criticizes him as the husband who deserted her for another woman and as the non-conformist who refused to respect the social and cultural norms of her society" (61). Lawino's idealization of native culture has the intended consequence of making European culture seem deficient. Bernth Lindfors says "Okot's strategy throughout the poem is to contrast the natural grace and dignity of traditional African ways with the grotesque artificiality of modern habits and practices that educated Africans have copied from Europe. The primary target is Ocol's 'apemanship' but Okot gradually widens the focus of Lawino's complaints to embrace much larger social, political and religious issues arising from rabid, unthinking Westernization" (147). John Haynes' observation, which apparently contradicts Lindfors' assessment, directs attention to what he (Haynes) perceives as a lack of seriousness in the poems. Haynes is right to say that p'Bitek's poems are dependent on "a simplified contrast between a traditional Acoli woman (who has no knowledge of such things as gas-cookers) and a half-baked imitator of foreign customs, who is her rival". He is wrong to call Lawino and Ocol "cartoon figures which have their point and their impact, chauvinistic and sexist as they are". Then he proceeds to say "They are accessible ... because they require little thought or adjustment of opinion to laugh at, to feel comforted by. This is not to deny their pertinence to post-colonial Africa, but to bring out p'Bitek's cultural perspective" (83-84).

Haynes is contradicting himself for, if Lawino and her husband are to be laughed at, how then can what they say be considered pertinent, taken seriously? He equates wit and simplicity with frivolity and lack of philosophical depth, which is not always the case. Lawino, surprisingly, demonstrates a grasp of contemporary issues that often engage the attention of intellectuals, and her arguments are logical and persuasive, contrary to Taban Lo Liyong's assertion that she lacks the intellectual background "to discourse on some of the issues that Okot wanted to debate". Liyong sees her with the same spectacles that John Haynes uses – as a playful character who does not "do more than to cavil and make fun" of foreigners and their ideology (87-92). Liyong also calls Ocol a bad advocate, jester and cultural critic of Europeans and the Africans who imitate them. He says Ocol's song is lackluster, and that he has a judicious attitude toward modernization. This may be true, but Liyong unfairly ignores the few occasions when Lawino criticizes Uganda's politicians:

> Someone said
> Independence falls like a bull buffalo
> And the hunters
> Rush to it with drawn knives
> For carving the carcass.
> And if your chest
> Is small, bony and weak
> They push you off ("Lawino" 107).

These lines portray a Darwinian picture of survival, of greedy bullies who treat independence as if it were an opportunity for carving up the body politic; only the strong survive while the weak who, presumably, include women, get pushed aside. All this is conveyed through Lawino's brilliant use of animal imagery.

She is an expert on Acoli chronology, and is afraid to wind the European clock in her house; the clock is only for decoration, to be admired: "To me the clock/Is a great

source of pride/It is beautiful to see" (63), but its "tock-tock-tock-tock" (which, incidentally, is her pun on "talk, talk, talk, talk", an incessant foreign voice) is not needed. She tells time astronomically and climatologically:

> I must first look at the sun,
> The cock must crow
> To remind me.
> In our village ...
> People wake up early
> When the horizon in the East
> Is aflame
> And in the West
> The Buffalo Star is ripe
> Like a yellow and sweet mango
> About to fall to the earth (64).

Lawino speaks simply and in a straight-forward manner. Her speech is devoid of affectation – which is the hallmark of the other female characters' voices in Petals, Anthills and One is Enough (Wanja, Beatrice and Amaka, respectively). In these lines, she skillfully flips the negative image of social Darwinism in her previous portrait of warring politicians, to offer a different, positive and peaceful picture of Acoli society as a natural state. In contrast, Western society and chronology, foregrounded on technology, are unnatural, regimented, structured for "morning tea", "breakfast", "when exactly to have coffee", "And the exact time/For taking the family photograph" (64). Her habitual reference to "Buffalo", and frequent use of plant imagery reflect her location in pastoral space, and her agonizing over its contamination by modernization and Westernization.

The English language and Christianity, signifiers of Western hegemony, play crucial roles in the poems. Lawino cannot speak English (the poems are translated versions of Acoli), and is therefore symbolically sheltered from its ideological effects. She is cognizant of Ocol's elevated status as a bilingual, educated man and is even proud

that he speaks English. However, she does not equate facility in a foreign language with basic intelligence or even knowledge 'per se'. Knowledge, for her, is empirical, based on anthropology and history, not linguistics. She knows, for example, that her children are sick just by observing their behavior, and does not need a stethoscope. Christian concepts of the Trinity and its logic of the Holy Communion baffle her. From her perspective, Christianity is not only a foreign religion; it is also comical because its priests talk in a funny language. Sunday is when protestants and catholics "shout" and "suffer from headaches". The Acoli god, "Jok", does not need a quotidian ceremonial structure. It prefers spontaneous sacrifices and prayers "when misfortune hits the homestead" (69). Christianity also needs idolatry, but does not solve social problems; traditional religion does.

Lawino, though witty, is also tiresome. She forces Ocol to erupt:

> Woman,
> Shut up!
> Pack your things
> Go! ("Song of Ocol" 121).

The ball is now in Ocol's court, and he must assert himself. So he starts by comparing his wife's complaints to the noise of a ram, when the butcher's knife sinks into its wind pipe. He says that she brags like a defeated general that has lost ten thousand men in battle, and turns the tables on her use of the buffalo image:

> Woman
> Your song
> Is rotting buffalo
> Left behind by
> Fleeing poachers,
> Its nose blocked
> With house-flies
> Sucking bloody mucus ... (122-124)

Ostensibly, Ocol is complaining about his wife's fondness for animal metaphor, but he is really degrading native culture. He realizes that her song mirrors the cultural outlook of Acoli collectivity, that "rotting buffalo" is appropriate diction for a natural philosophy that labels Westernized elites "fleeing poachers". The "house-flies" cause the death of Acoli society, transform it from a cultural utopia to a cultural carcass. Similarly, traditional society, in its pristine form, no longer exists. Ocol perceives Africa as still a dark continent, a lazy giant riddled with poverty, ignorance and superstition whose children are timid, malnourished and trapped by parasitism, primitivism and history:

> Unweaned,
> Clinging to mother's milkless breasts
> Clinging to brother,
> To uncle, to clan,
> To tribe
> To blackness
> To Africa
> Africa
> This rich granary
> Of taboos, customs,
> Traditions ... (126)

"Mother's milkless breasts" must be replaced by a balanced diet, better clothes, proper medical care and good housing – all signifiers of a progressive society. "Taboos, customs and traditions" imply archaic structure and conservative ideology that embarrass Ocol:

> To hell
> With your pumpkins
> And your old Homesteads ...
>
> We will smash
> The taboos
> One by one ...
> We will uproot
> Every sacred tree
> And demolish every ancestral shrine (126)

These lines respond to Lawino's early plea, "Let no one uproot the Pumpkin." Ocol and others are bent on modernizing tribal society. The pumpkin is a metaphor for cultural roots, and is the key to understanding both poems. "In the land of the Acoli, the pumpkin grows all year round and is therefore an important source of food and life. No sensible person would intentionally uproot a pumpkin because it symbolizes the continuity of Acoli traditional life as represented by Lawino" (Okumu 59). Lawino's song states "a profound, philosophical truth not only of our survival, but also of that which identifies us. If you uproot where you come from, then you have got nothing else – no pumpkin – you live like the people who live in the towns, from one flat to another because there is nothing to uproot except your valuable pictures" (Heywood 155).

Ocol embodies the fusion of nativism and modernism. He is simultaneously Acoli and Westernized, similar to Lawino and different from her, playful yet serious. The playful Ocol is fond of using "we", juxtaposing his subjectivity with Acoli and Ugandan collectivity. The serious part of him, on a few occasions, moderates his enthusiasm for otherness. Although he would like to see Uganda and Africa get rid of village poets, "Karamojong" elders, the Aime Cesaires, Leopold Senghors and "all the preachers of Negritude," postcolonial Africa should be wary of foreign ideology:

> Tell me
> You student of communism,
> And you Professor of History
> Did Senegalese blood
> Flow in the veins
> Of Karl Marx?
> And Lenin,
> Was he born
> At Arusha? ("Song of Ocol" 150)

These lines reflect a quest for nativist authenticity and socialist orientation in the poems' ideological esthetics – which itself is a variation of hybridization. An ethnically-based African philosophy is more relevant than a Russian one, because it (African philosophy) will jell with Africa's ethnically-based traditions. "Arusha" is a town in Tanzania where its late President, Julius Nyrere, issued his socialist manifesto. Ocol welcomes Uhuru, independence for creating new avenues for social progress, but is critical of its beneficiaries who never did anything in the fight for independence. Decolonization can be counterproductive; it can exacerbate tribal tensions, stifle expectations and breed corrupt leaders:

> We sowed,
> We watered
> Acres of Cynicism (143).

With this agricultural imagery, he expresses regret that independence has not yielded better crops. Colonialism's demise was also the end of a native cultural era, of the "village chief sitting on the stool", a time when people drank "Kwete" beer and "Waragi" (148). However, the new "flames of civilization" cannot be extinguished. The new Uganda is a landscape of aspirins, soap and towels, multicultural and inhabited by cultural hybrids who are on a mission of self-dislocation.

Like Faithful in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Ocol becomes a skeptic as he presents a panoramic view of postcolonial Uganda, and evaluates what he sees:

> I see the great gate
> Of the city flung open
> I see men and women
> Walking in ... (149)

He joins the throng and sees an alien structure called Parliament; he enters and observes "Bwana [Master] President", "Mister Speaker", "Honourable Ministers discussing the

White Paper", the "Backbenchers and Opposition chiefs" – a motley crew of imitators. His next stop is the courts, carbon copies of the English judicial system where "your Lordships", the "learned attorney" and his "brother advocate" read the "Law Reports" (149). Next is the church where he finds a Ugandan Bishop "blessing the people in Latin", a language they do not understand. Ocol is not saying: 'this is what Uganda should be' but rather: 'this is what it is'. He is just being a realist, calling attention to the current situation, and its complexity:

> Tell me
> You worshipful Mayors,
> Aldermen, Councillors,
> You Town Clerks in wigs
> You trade union leader
> Organizing the strike,
> You fat black capitalist
> In the dark suit
> You sipping the Scotch ...
> Military men
> And you Police chiefs
> I see you studying the situation
> And plotting the next move
>
> Speak,
>
> Tell the world
> In English or in French,
> Talk about
> The African foundation
> On which we are
> Building the new nations
> Of Africa (149-150)

In these lines, Ocol demands that Uganda's elites and politicians affirm their African identity as cultural difference, in the act of speaking or articulating the nation (the aurality, rather than narrativity of the nation, something heard, not read). Ocol is also pleading for an African sign as he laments the loss of an African identity, because of

Westernization and the double-speaking ambivalence of Africa's ruling class. It is not surprising that he, who earlier was tormented by Lawino's voice, is now anxious to hear the collective voice of Ugandan patriarchy; he is, after all, a member of the patriarchy. What Bhabba calls the "enigma of language" (in this case English and French), is "at once internal and external to the speaking subject [Ocol] that provides the most apt analogue for imagining the structure of ambivalence that constitutes modern social [Ugandan] authority" (The Location of Culture 146). Ocol's advice to Lawino and others is: you are either traditional or modern, because there is no in-between and the way you become modern is to enter the "City gate", leave native space (which is culturally hermetic).

Two basic structures collide in "Song of Lawino" and "Song of Ocol": tribal and Western. Specifically, familial structure (the couple's house) is a microcosm of Acoli society, and both private and public spheres have similar fissures. Modernism and Westernization collide with tradition and nativism. The cultural clash is influenced by a linguistic one, the difference between a uniquely Acoli and Western poetic mode, and the poems' orality automatically transforms them into social discourses – and gendered sociolects. Ngugi wa Thiongo's criticism of "Song of Ocol" as a Europhone response to "Song of Lawino" is a good assessment, but it is contradictory to call Lawino a non-existent personality, even metaphorically:

> ... Ocol the educated cannot answer even the simplest question put to him because his wife does not understand English. She does not exist; she is invisible. Lawino laments her woes and concerns in a song in an African language. She raises questions about performance, economics, culture, religion, education, time, politics ... Ocol answers her – in song, yes, but in English. In this case, his answer is a total negation of everything Lawino

> symbolizes. He would even ban her language ... His answer, whatever it is, is inaccessible to her (wa Thiongo, "Allegory")

If Lawino does not exist, how can Ocol respond to her and how does Ngugi really know that Ocol uses English to communicate with his wife? Ocol is Acoli too, and their quotidian, marital existence presupposes an ability for one to understand the other. Apparently, Ngugi is applying Gayatri Spivak's theory of female subalterneity to Lawino, in an ideological context, but he refuses to acknowledge the fact and effect of Lawino's loquacity. Her protestations negate her second-class status, and put her on the same dialectical plank with Ocol. In addition, it is a stretch for Ngugi to surmise that Ocol would advocate banning the Acoli language, for Ocol must know that it is the lingua franca, and the masses would oppose any attempt to replace it with English. Both poems offer a reductive, stereotypical image of womanhood and analogize Lawino to a past, immutable culture. She is ahistorical and conservative, while Ocol is in tune with the inexorable march of progress. The poems explore power relations in a chronotope of gender, in an inherently patriarchal landscape that excludes women from nation-building and perpetuates them in domesticity. Male sexuality is synonymous with political power, but female sexuality with political passivity or powerlessness. Lawino is identified with nativism, because only she can resolve the cultural-historical dilemma that is the legacy of colonialism. The poems articulate culture as a dialectic of native and Western temporalities. Acoli tradition is timeless, and this explains why Lawino is located in the past as well as the present. Ocol is only located in the present, the postcolonial moment that interrogates Acoli tradition and threatens it with Westernization.

MATERIALISM VS. MATRIMONY

A similar interrogation of tradition takes place in Flora Nwapa's novel, One is Enough, which also has a female character challenging patriarchal hegemony. "Song of Lawino" and One is Enough are feminist discourses on woman as 'other'. Amaka, the protagonist of Nwapa's novel, and Lawino show a desire for transcendence, crossing over to relocate themselves, exiting domesticity in order to participate in the public sphere. One difference between the two is that Lawino fails in her quest for gender parity while Amaka not only achieves it, but exceeds society's expectations as well. Another difference is that Amaka is located in the present, but Lawino is trapped by the past. In addition, Obiora (Amaka's husband) is a traditionalist, different from Ocol (Lawino's husband) who is a modernist. Lawino relocates to a collective native space; Amaka lands in economic space. Incidentally, and coincidentally, Okot p'Bitek and Flora Nwapa are dead. It is a tribute to their memory to juxtapose their texts, to argue that both are similar in the way they construct postcoloniality, on a gender axis, even though Uganda and Nigeria are geographically different.

One is Enough, a novel about domesticity, marriage and motherhood is set in Eastern Nigeria, formerly "Biafra". It is also about Igbo culture, a woman's status as 'other' in Igbo patriarchy, and the successful suppression of male voice by female collectivity. "The features of oral literature and the Igbo value system", according to Brenda F. Berrian, "are dominant influences upon the linguistic structure in Nwapa's fiction" (54). She further states that "Nwapa demonstrates a keen ear that not only

catches the nuances, the gossip, and the arguments heard in women's speech but also enables her to translate them into an English idiom. The women's spoken conversations with interwoven stories dominate the narrative. Their speeches and/or oral gossip are sprinkled with anecdotes, oral wisdom, moral judgments, sympathy, and folk wisdom" (54). Such prominence of female voices, in Nwapa's novels, betray her feminist sensibilities despite her persistent refusal to admit that she was a feminist. Marie Umeh correctly observes that Nwapa "actually feminizes Nigerian letters as she realistically fictionalizes the shrewd, ubiquitous market women, energetic female farmers, sagacious wives and mothers, and astute women chiefs and priestesses as an integral part of quotidian existence" and that her "canonical contribution to Nigerian letters is, then, a 'poetics of economic independence and self-reliance for female empowerment'" (23-24).

One is Enough's chief character, Amaka, has an aunt who is always giving her advice about life and marriage. Amaka gets different advice, to be hedonistic and seize the day, from her mother. Amaka is married to Obiora, whose mother is obsessed with grandchildren, and is tired of waiting for Amaka (who, at the beginning of the story, is childless) to give birth to a child. Amaka, a middle-aged woman, has always been faithful to, and supportive of Obiora who has an affair with another woman. This woman also bears him a child. Postcolonialism, in the novel, ushers a change in cultural values and gender relations. Women have become assertive and independent; they can now make it on their own, and do not need to be wives or mothers to be self-fulfilled. Obiora, a wife-beater, feels threatened by Amaka's independence and business success:

> A woman needs protection from her husband. If you want to act as if you are endowed with all the wisdom of Solomon, and get wrong and stupid advice, all well and good (One is Enough 20).

Conservative ideology (female subjugation) is in conflict with progressive enlightenment (gender equality). Things get so out of hand that Amaka considers adoption as a solution for her childlessness: "Was a woman nothing because she was unmarried or barren? Was there no other fulfillment for her?" (22). Infertility is responsible for Amaka being perceived as an 'other' in relation to child-bearing women. One is Enough is a critique of Igbo patriarchy:

> But the trouble with our men is their ego. They refuse to appreciate their wives. Your husband will always show you that he is a man, and put you in your rightful place which is under his thumb (27).

Amaka is the same as men, in a Bakhtinian chronotope of class, through her appropriation of male signs (money, economic success) and her relocation from domestic to public space. She is different from men, in a chronotope of gender because Igbo society still expects her to bear children, stay married and located in domestic space. Thus, the Bakhtinian chronotope itself is a text of hybridity in One is Enough. Amaka enlists the aid of capitalism, private business (an assumed male enterprise) to reconstruct her sexual identity, change it from feminine to androgynous and make it ambiguous. This change reflects the non-fictional, social reality of Eastern Nigeria itself and Nwapa's own Ugwuta (her hometown) cultural heritage. Nwapa, according to Marie Umeh, sympathizes with Amaka because she herself (Nwapa) was an 'other' vis a vis Western publishing establishment. Umeh says this implies that Amaka's blurring of sexual identity parallels Nwapa's own reconstruction of ideological sameness, in the world of publishing:

> ... She decried the "multiple marginality" she experienced with her Western publisher who regarded her as a "minor

> writer". Regarded as a Third World writer, her London publisher did not bother to print and distribute her books locally and internationally when they were in demand as they would if she came from a so-called "first world" country. According to Nwapa, Heinemann's placing her in the literary backwaters resulted in the piracy of her books in Africa and the death of her voice globally ... Recognizing her status as "other", Nwapa took it upon herself to distribute her books herself and established Tana Press Limited in 1977 for this purpose (22).

Are Western texts different from so-called third-world texts, and is One is Enough "third-world"? If it were then, from Fredric Jameson's perspective, it would allegorize Eastern Nigeria, and would not need to be deciphered because "the telling of the individual story and the individual experience cannot but ultimately involve the whole laborious telling of the experience of the collectivity itself" (85-86). In other words, One is Enough, like other so-called "third-world" texts, would be a fragmented body, without a collective past or future. Jameson's suggestion that "any articulation of radical difference ... is susceptible to appropriation by that strategy of otherness which Edward Said, in the context of the Middle East, called 'orientalism'" (77), exposes his own article to the charge of orientalism due to its analysis of non-Western literature as an 'other'.

Aijaz Ahmad, in his reply to Jameson, posits that the term "third world" is polemical, has no theoretical basis, and faults Jameson's binary oppositional construction of first/third world for being empirically ungrounded, in capitalistic terms. Jameson, he continues, ought to know that 'description' is never ideologically or cognitively neutral (Jameson claims he is using "third world" descriptively, not ideologically); that it is central to colonial discourse which is a master at assembling a "monstrous machinery" of describing sexualities of colonized subjects. He criticizes what he sees as Jameson's tendency to homogenize the cultural specificity of difference as "otherness", and to

submerge third-world cultural homogeneity within a "singular identity of 'experience'." There is only one world – says Ahmad – and there is a difference between 'nation' and 'collectivity'. 'Collectivity' may include personal experiences tied to gender, political party, caste, class, village, etc. without "referring back to the 'experience of colonialism and imperialism'" (77-82). Ahmad's arguments could very well be supporting my contention that One is Enough does not, justifiably, blame colonialism for women's suppression in Igbo society. Patriarchal hegemony, 'per se', is not homogenous; it is culture specific. The novel's fictional reality is such that, with or without colonialism, foreign 'others', female characters are expected to be, and remain, obedient wives, nurturing mothers and economic dependents. The novel is a praxis of otherness, not in relation to Jameson's first-world canon, but in the context of gender and class. Jameson ignores the fact that alterity is not copyrighted by non-Western authors and texts. For example, Samuel Richardson's Pamela explores it in a gender context, in almost similar fashion to One is Enough. Pamela's struggle to dominate Mr. B. in love matters is, still, a fight on behalf of eighteenth-century, English, female collectivity whose male aristocracy is hegemonically parallel to Igbo patriarchy in Nwapa's novel. Incidentally, Mr. B's England is a different cultural landscape from Amaka's twentieth-century Eastern Nigeria. It is therefore troubling that Jameson considers the novel a Western (rather than universal) machinery of representation of structures – political, public, private, gender – and then proceeds to admit that "third-world" structures differ from those in the "first". As an outsider, Jameson does not realize that what he calls "allegories", non-canonical texts, may not be so construed by insiders (i.e. their non-Western authors and readers).

In One is Enough, Amaka's life is a good example of Ahmad's "experiences tied to gender", the same as Igbo female collectivity. For example, her sister, Ayo, is a feminist who leaves her husband and is "kept" by a Permanent Secretary whose wife "went to the land of the white people to read books" (33). Amaka, too, leaves her husband and has an affair with a Catholic priest, Father McLaid (a Nigerian orphan who, as a young boy, was adopted by an Irish missionary). She will not marry again because, as the novel's title says, 'One is Enough'. Incidentally, Amaka "has no intention of depriving herself of sexuality simply because she will not marry" (Bazin 196). This affair fulfills her sexually and enriches her financially, because she uses the reverend father to get lucrative military contracts (he is also the official Chaplain to the Army). Amaka asserts her independence by going into private business in the capital city of Lagos, and eventually becoming successful in the "attack trade" (profiteering during Nigeria's Civil War). Adaobi, Amaka's female friend wants to be independent, in private business for herself; she is not content with a government job for herself and her husband, Mike. Amaka builds a three-bedroom bungalow, and buys an almost brand-new Peugeot 504 (a foreign, French car). In short, the novel is about a community of female capitalists, soul sisters who view money as a tool to empower themselves. "Nwapa is concerned to explore the options for women in a changed, postcolonial society, which offers them, for the first time, social as well as economic and emotional independence. What the novel, 'One is Enough' shows, however, is that this is only achievable in a context of feminine supportiveness and solidarity, including the heroine's mother, sister and friends" (Bryce-Okunlola 204). By the end of the story, Amaka conceives male twins, a miraculous situation that, according to Carole Boyce Davies, "plays with the

'immaculate conception motif' because the children's father is a man of God" (252). Boyce Davies includes Nwapa among other female writers who "provide the other half of African people's story" and "present the 'great unwritten stories of African literature". These writers do not idealize motherhood, despite African society's reliance on children as an element "in the acquisition of success in life". Nwapa's contribution, in the African canon, is the persistent call for a "conscious movement of women against restrictions of sex" (253-254). Nwapa's specific philosophy concerning the marriage question is that "all women should have men in their lives. The men could be husbands or lovers" (One is Enough 66). Sex is an instrument of female empowerment which, as in Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah, is referred to as "bottom power", as opposed to the assumed 'top power' (or brains) of males.

In "The Black Woman and the Problem of Gender: An African Perspective," Ali Mazrui speaks of three types of sexism: "benevolent", "benign" and "malignant". He offers three strategies for black females to escape such sexism – "liberating", "centering" and "empowering." Mazrui calls benevolent sexism (which includes gallantry) a protective and discriminatory device to perpetuate women's underprivileged status in Western societies. For example, "In Western culture men volunteer to carry heavy suitcases on behalf of women, to open doors for them":

> and, until recently, to pay restaurant bills for themselves as well as for their woman-date. These days more and more Western women insist on paying their own share of the restaurant bill as a mark of equality and liberation(87).

In contrast, Mazrui says that in Africa, past and present, and especially in the rural areas, women do not enjoy the benefits of benevolent sexism partly because African societies are matrilineal. Nevertheless, he continues, the women have political power (e.g., among

the Ashanti in Ghana, where the Queen Mother plays a crucial role in determining who the next Asantahene will be). Thus, whereas benevolent sexism signifies weakness in Western culture, it denotes power in African culture. Mazrui defines "benign sexism" as a practice that recognizes and honors gender differences "without bestowing sexual advantages" (89). He cites the example of naming newborns in Nigeria (an example that helps us recall Beatrice's naming of Ikem's baby in Anthills of the Savannah). The problem with Mazrui's article is its tendency to homogenize Western and African culture. Postcolonial, as well as pre-colonial, African societies have different cultural practices; the same is true for English, French or German society at any time in their history. Therefore, I do not think that his categories of sexism apply to every culture, in exactly the same way.

Of relevance to Nwapa's One is Enough is Mazrui's specific example of the name "Abiola" which, he says, is gender-neutral, "Although all the 'Abiolas' I personally know are men" (89). He further states that "The Igbo seem to have a high proportion of gender-neutral names, suitable for both boys and girls," whereas "most cultures all over the world, however, have different categories of names for baby girls and for baby boys" (89). Is it possible, then, that Nwapa deliberately chose to name Amaka's husband "Abiola," in order to make the point that he is a feminized subjectivity, from the outset? If so, then gender-roles are reversed and Abiola plays second fiddle to women, an idea that is reinforced by the fact that his mother also has complete control over him. The fact that Amaka leaves him is a symbolic act of female conspiracy, of a female author colluding with her heroine to turn Igbo sexism on its head. Abiola is not supposed to be dominated by the two most important women in his life – his wife and mother. It is

reverse degradation, in Bakhtinian, carnivalesque sense. His name, "Abiola," is itself a linguistic perspective of gender, signified on Mazrui's axis of "benign sexism." "Benign sexism" is the corollary of gender that is signified on an axis of fashion (i.e. the aesthetics of sexism in which, for example, women do their hair differently from men), and foregrounded on divorce in Western and African societies. While alimony in Western countries, is now gender-neutral, custody is still gender-specific because women disproportionately obtain physical custody of children in divorce cases. In African societies, it is the other way round (Mazrui 92). "Malignant sexism" is the most dehumanizing and pervasive of Mazrui's three categories; it is neither geography-specific, nor limited to a particular era. In pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial Africa, women were, and are, victims of it. According to Mazrui, female disempowerment is a universal problem, not just an African one; the lack of female political and economic power is an example of malignant sexism. He mentions the "paradox of gender," in which women are mothers, men are warriors and rulers, despite the fact that women "control the womb, the means of 'reproduction.' But women do not control the means of physical 'coercion': the spear, the bow and arrow, and later the gun" (95). He says that in Gikuyu (Kenya) mythology, women are collectively disempowered through impregnation, because being pregnant is seen as both a moment of creation and physical vulnerability. This may be true in certain East African societies, but it is certainly not the case in Igbo society as portrayed in <u>One is Enough</u>. Nwapa does not treat pregnancy as a political liability; it re-affirms motherhood, with the implicit suggestion that child-bearing is the most significant event through which a woman confirms her relevance in Igbo society.

While I agree with Mazrui's claim that African women in rural societies are "centered," but not "liberated," Amaka in One is Enough shatters this stereotype. She is centered and liberated, by giving birth and going into private business. Her empowerment differs from the female empowerment of Lawino, and even Beatrice in Anthills of the Savannah, for example. Lawino's occurs in a context of carnival, of satirizing her husband's embrace of Westernization and parodying foreign practices; Beatrice's empowerment is presented within the context of woman as goddess (a point that Mazrui also emphasizes, in addition to two other contexts – motherhood and religion – which, as he says, most African writers glorify). Mazrui correctly views African women as more liberated under military regimes (Beatrice and Amaka, in my view, are perfect examples in contrast to Wanja, in Petals of Blood, who is sexually exploited in a society that is under civilian rule) in the postcolonial era, especially in the diplomatic sphere. More women have been appointed as ambassadors and foreign ministers, most notably in Uganda, than men (Mazrui 100-101). Mazrui concludes his article with a suggestion that the solution for "gender-paradox" in postcolonial Africa is "gender-planning," in which governments actively encourage and recruit women to participate in power-sharing, so as to bring about political and economic social transformation.

Amaka, in One is Enough, is Nwapa's own solution for gender-paradox in Igbo society. Amaka transforms her life not through Mazrui's "gender-planning," but by what I view as gender-asserting. According to Ifi Amadiume, "a strong cultural bond of female solidarity in traditional Igbo systems overcame the potentially divisive effects of gender and class among women" (179), a historical fact that Nwapa's novel implicitly emphasizes, in its depiction of modern Igbo society as male-centered and locked in a

struggle for power in the domestic and public spheres. Oyeronke Oyewumi goes beyond the general assumption of gender as a social construct, and calls it "a historical and cultural phenomenon." She adds that "one cannot assume the social organization of one culture (the dominant West included) as universal or the interpretations of the experiences of one culture as explaining another one" (10). "Given the inseparability of sex and gender in the West, which results from the use of biology as an ideology for mapping the social world," Oyewumi continues, "'sex' and 'gender' ... are essentially synonyms" (12). Oyewumi's comments are relevant for an appreciation of the sex/gender dynamic in One is Enough, where Amaka's elevated status in public society, because of her business success, is diminished by her inability to bear children, in domestic society. Motherhood is a variant of Oyewumi's "biology as an ideology," that makes Igbo society look lie its Western counterpart, in so far as biological factors determine how gender is constructed. In Oyewumi's words, such cultural logic "is actually a 'bio-logic'" (The Invention of Women 11), and a tool of all forms of patriarchy – Western, African, pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial – that relegate women to a second-class status:

> The colonial process was sex-differentiated insofar as the colonizers were male and used gender identity to determine policy ... in the colonial situation, there was a hierarchy of four, not two categories. Beginning at the top, these were: men (European). Women (European), native (African men), and Other (African women) ... African women suffered a "double colonization": one form from European domination and the other from indigenous tradition imposed by African men ... African females were colonized by Europeans as Africans and as African women. They were dominated, exploited, and inferiorized as Africans together with African men and then separately inferiorized and marginalized as African women (122).

In other words, colonialism was a moment of hybridization (specifically, fusion); it androgynized African identity on racial and cultural axes. Independence, postcolonialism was also a moment of hybridization, a splitting of identity on a gender axis. This inevitably leads to the logical conclusion that gender gives the ingredient of sameness-in-difference to both colonialism and postcolonialism, in the African landscape. Lawino and Amaka are victims of "double colonization," first as postcolonial women and second as wives. Each "shares in the marginality of the female. And as 'African', she becomes part of the colonially constructed Other" (Davies, "Writing Off Marginality" 251).

One is Enough's central message is that a woman does not need to marry a second time, in order to regain respect; it rejects tradition, as it relates to women. The British have left, but female subjugation continues. During colonial times, Igbo women were passive objects of desire, from a male perspective. After political independence, they became active and rebellious subjects; they also became symbolic sites for three events: struggle, appropriation and re-affirmation. The first involves gender clash, the second is about using wealth to gain power and the third, the birth of twins, means Amaka accepts motherhood as a major component of Igbo cultural reality. She is, therefore, the same as other traditional women, but different because she leaves her husband, refuses to remarry and gains economic freedom. She is hybridized; her Igbo self is disrupted by her fanatic embrace of capitalism, and is forced to coexist with her Westernized self. Amaka's hybridity also means she is a figure of alterity, a site for conflicting forces – domestic, public, indigenous; traditional and modern. Her postcoloniality is not fixed. It is fissured with difference and sameness, her fight to relocate herself outside tradition as well as her desire for motherhood, to remain inside Igbo society. Masculinity resides within the

boundary of Amaka's femininity, resulting in what Bhabha calls "alterity of identity", or "sameness-in-difference" (Location 54).

Ernest Emenyonu, in a glowing tribute to Nwapa, on the occasion of her death, credits her self-confident female voice with putting an end to male dominance of the African literary landscape:

> No one can write an authentic history of African Literature or indeed Nigerian literary history today without giving Flora Nwapa a prominent place ...there may never be again a Flora Nwapa ... a woman who like the female protagonists in her fiction believed in meritocracy ... Nigeria, therefore, has lost one of her best female voices ... a woman who showed the light to other women and after whose literary creativity, African womanhood and/or feminism acquired a distinct image and identity (Umeh, Emerging Perspectives 42-43).

Theodora Akachi Ezeigbo echoes Emenyonu's view of Nwapa as female literary pioneer, and applauds her "historical imagination." Ezeigbo suggests that Nwapa's novels explore female experience "from the past to contemporary times – a corollary to what Achebe and Ngugi have done from the male perspective" (57). She also states that Nwapa restores the dignity of African womanhood that is "played down or neglected in the works of the male writers," and that she "concentrates on women's lives and women's culture, on domestic history as well as economic history as they touch on women's lives" (58-59). According to Ezeigbo, One is Enough is Nwapa's "forthright encouragement of childless women to look for other ways of living a self-fulfilled and profitable life" (65). Mary Kolawole does not accept what she sees as Western critics' "condescending" portrait of the African woman as passive and resigned to male oppression, and perceptions of her as "other" – an attitude which, for Kolawole, "has its origin in colonialism, postcoloniality, and tradition, as well as the predominantly patriarchal

structure of the African society" (Umeh, Emerging Perspectives 223-224). Kolawole, like Emenyonu and Ezeigbo, believes that Nwapa is a revolutionary:

> Centering gender issues has enabled her to raise new questions and to interrogate conventional images of African women's voicelessness ... As regards the problem of effecting agency for the subaltern raised by many scholars, Nwapa's loyalty is clearly with the downtrodden, which happens to be women. She overcomes the problem of the post-colonial intellectual as an informant or apprentice of the hegemonic group ... She belongs to the outer group, the "Other," but refuses to remain a shadow of the Self where the self represents the dominant group in terms of gender or race. She is speaking as a subaltern for the subaltern by making the African women visible and audible (238-239).

According to Shivaji Sengupta, One is Enough stresses "changing concepts of the private and the public, and the role desire plays in the transition, and the implication this process has on female sexuality." In addition, "the exit from the private and emergence into the public has been caused by the desire to live life with dignity, without accepting the traditional role of a wife" (550-551). Desire, Sengupta continues, encompasses Amaka's energy, sense of purpose and active life to "go it alone in a public world of men without a man, as a woman" (553).

Sengupta correctly posits that, even though the novel does not deal with sex, per se, sexuality plays an important role in enabling Amaka to fuse the domestic and public domain. Sengupta also believes that the novel is not about female "philosophical sadness about life," but the heroine's desire, her "successful purposefulness" in democratic and public sphere, with the aid of progressive materialism. Sengupta admires Nwapa's "affective will," her use of language to investigate female oppression and liberate women from "the male dominated Nigerian establishment." She particularly likes Nwapa's compact style which gives "little room for the reader to imagine" because the novel's

language is "more like closed symbols making only one meaning rather than opening up multiplicity of meanings" (563). Sengupta concludes her essay with a strong support of Nwapa's feminist inclination and uncomplicated artistry:

> ... Being entirely sociologically and politically motivated to raise the consciousness of Nigerian women, her language in 'One is Enough' does not seem to be interested in relative truth. When it comes to women's suffering Nwapa's motivation is absolute truth. Her discourse is unidirectional, predetermined and programmed. Spurred on by her experience of the suffering of Nigerian women Nwapa's purpose in this novel does not seem to be esthetic or philosophical. It is instead a straightforward success story (563).

Marie Umeh sees female characters in <u>One is Enough</u> as a collective, centrifugal force that tends away from male centralization, in the domestic domain, to female solidarity in the public sphere. She is correct and, in my view, her observation is a good example of alterity in the novel – the simultaneous rejection and adoption of dominance, ideological sameness-in-difference. For example, Amaka rebels against domestic control, but relishes her role of financial fulcrum for others, including her husband. Her friend in Lagos buys her husband, Mike, a car – and then lies to his friends that he paid for it, so as not to embarrass him. Such examples of women's economic importance attest to Nwapa's literary activism:

> ...For the most part, Nigerian male authors such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and Cyprian Ekwensi depicted women living under a rigid sex-role segregation system, with no individuality, personhood, or power. However, Nwapa's women take center stage by exerting their industry, ingenuity, and resilience. They often wield power and protect themselves from humiliation and dehumanization ... (Umeh, "Signifyin(g) The Griottes" 117-118).

One is Enough is "a response to the empirical conditions of women's lives in Nigeria, an insistence on what 'is', not what ought to be. Its most significant aspect is its retention of the centrality of motherhood combined with the decentering of the role of wife, so rewriting the script of Nigerian middle-class values with its emphasis on the supportive 'good woman'", says Jane Bryce-Okunlola (207-208). I could not agree more.

CONCLUSION

Postcolonial experience is shaped by the political, religious, economic, linguistic, ideological and cultural influences of the ex-colonizer and the traditional practices that existed (and still do) in the ex-colony. It is rife with tension because some postcolonial subjects embrace Westernization while others resist it. The postcolonial subject is, usually, a cultural and ideological colossus of Rhodes, with one foot in Western space and the other firmly cemented on native ground. Anglophone, postcolonial texts generally focus on colonialism's role in disrupting native identity. They are also sites "where different narrative paths from the African tradition and from modernity, from writing and from 'oraliture' at last meet, intersect, and regenerate each other" (Petrilli 106). In the political sphere, postcolonial politicians fail in their attempts to ape Western (Westminster) governmental practices because the masses not only expect their rulers to behave as traditional chiefs, but also due to the corruption of such officials. In the cultural sphere, though, these ruling elites succeed to the point of caricature; they become English without being white (Bhabha). Christianity, a legacy of colonialism, has won the religious battle with indigenous religion, and Western education is now a precious ticket to membership of the ruling and elite classes. However, Westernization continues to create tensions and mediate cultural and ideological differences in the postcolonial landscape, and Anglophone postcolonial authors respond differently. Some offer radical alternatives and others simply acknowledge its presence, plus the impossibility of its defeat.

Ngugi's embrace of Marxism, a foreign ideology, undermines his criticism of Westernization, cultural and economic otherness. p'Bitek's ambivalent treatment of Lawino and Ocol leaves the reader wondering whether or not p'Bitek is truly an advocate for cultural exclusivity. Ngugi and p'Bitek position themselves oppositionally, vis a vis European cultural influences in Africa's postcolonial landscape. Like 'negritude' writers, they can be called Manichean in their literary attitude to hybridity. To borrow Simon Simonse's reiteration of Wole Soyinka's critique of negritude authors, Ngugi and p'Bitek "want to be the opposite of the European conquest culture [and] they imprison themselves in a negation of things western, thus remaining victims ... and being caught within the magical circle of Manicheism ... a mode of thought involving mutually exclusive opposites [which] is unacceptable since it is un-African [because] Africa has 'a culture which is most radically anti-Manichean'" (454 – 455). Achebe and Nwapa have a different attitude. Achebe, though critical of Westernization, recognizes that it is very unlikely postcolonial Africa will be rid of it because the ruling and elite classes are deified, partly because of their perceived cultural resemblance to the ex-colonizer. Indeed, the governed masses themselves embrace Westernization, equate inferiority with nativism and view superiority as the exclusive property of a Euro-center. For example, in Anthills of the Savannah, having a sense of humor and self-effacement, plus what Ikem calls their "animal capacity to endure the pain of, shall we say, domestication" (37) are not the only antidote to dejection suffered by the lower class because of the oppression and corruption of the ruling class. The oppressed also insist that their oppression "be performed in style", and there is a "tolerance verging on admiration by the trudging-

jigger-toed oppressed for the Mercedes-Benz-driving, private-jet-flying, luxury-yacht-cruising oppressor" (127).

Flora Nwapa sees no difference between pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial Igbo societies; from her perspective, all three oppress women. So, if Westernization could help emancipate women, Nwapa would welcome it. Lawino and Amaka are subaltern women and, hence, the most subaltern in patriarchal postcolonial society. According to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "the subaltern woman will be as mute as ever" (90), and can only speak by means of some conscious gesture of displacement, such as 'Sati' in colonial India (93). Spivak further states that "Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernization" (102). Spivak is partly correct, for Lawino and Amaka are, indeed, trapped by tradition and Westernization, but Lawino speaks without displacing herself. She talks back to Ocol from native space. Amaka rebels against Igbo patriarchy from an in-between space: domestic/public and legal/economic (through divorce and business). Lawino and Amaka, together with Muthoni, Nyambura, Wanja and Beatrice are female equivalents of Waiyaki, Ezeulu, Oduche, Munira, Karega, Abdulla, Chris, Ikem, Sam and Mad Medico – they are all hybridized postcolonial selves.

This dissertation has argued that alterity and hybridity are common ingredients of postcoloniality, as depicted in the primary texts that have been discussed, and that hybridity mediates the varied tensions in the fictive landscapes of these texts. Hybridity renders the different postcolonial subjectivities the same, in East and West African

Anglophone fiction. Such thematic, philosophical sameness-in-difference makes The River Between/Arrow of God, Petals of Blood/Anthills of the Savannah, Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol/One is Enough intertextual pairs, interlocutory and in a dialogic relationship, on axes of double-voicedness and double-wordedness. In addition, the major characters of all these works are in a dialogic relationship with a homogenized, Westernized 'other', as well as an otherness that is contained within their native selves.

The dissertation has applied (not criticized) the ideas of Bhabha, Bakhtin and Levinas to the discussion. Bhabha's narrative style is obscurantist, but his theory of alterity and hybridity is very relevant in any debate about postcoloniality. Levinas and Bakhtin are (were) philosophers, not literary critics; yet, from an epistemological and phenomenological standpoint, their ideas about cognition and heteroglossia, respectively, have important implications for conceptualizing otherness. The gist of Levinas' philosophy of alterity is that there is an ethical dimension to interpersonal relations; through transcendence, one subjectivity is connected, peacefully, to an 'other'. Otherness, in other words, need not mean one is better than an 'other'. Bakhtinian ideas of heteroglossia, differing sociolects, as I have applied them, mean these postcolonial authors must be commended for their commitment to democratic, novelistic discourse. Bakhtinian dialogism "encourages readings of history and culture, in addition to language itself, and it allows for, rather than suppresses, tension within a text ... Dialogism's focus on the interplay of discourse thus provides a critical lens through which to read the fictions of literature ..." (Andrade 95). Through dialogism, culture is valorized for its progressive and democratic tendencies by means of parody and laughter (carnival). This is particularly true in "Song of Ocol", where Lawino's Buffalo and pumpkin imagery is

parodied by Ocol, in his attempt to argue against Acoli tradition. Parody is also an epistemological tool for abolishing fear, for equalizing Lawino and Ocol as they confront each other; it assigns equal value to each's sociolect.

Postcoloniality, in The River Between, Arrow of God, and the other works in this dissertation, has spatial boundaries (nation and subjectivity as 'self'). The characters live in postcolonial space and participate in it. Therefore, because they observe and initiate actions in the texts, their postcoloniality is a version of Bakhtinian carnival. These works are textual examples of hybridity, because they offer a dialectic of progress: tradition/modernism, African/European. "In performing or remaking ourselves as postcolonial readers ... we are", according to David Carter, "performing an 'ethical' operation, possibly of a high order, in the formation of new subjectivities, new capacities, new dispositions [which] historicises other institutional reading positions and dispositions" (295). Carter further states, correctly, that postcolonial criticism "can be a significant mode of self-fashioning and work on texts, of self-knowledge (a way of knowing the self as an effect of certain techniques of reading): it produces new readings and new readers ... [and] The condition of hybridicity (in the text, the culture, the critic) is less the radical 'other' of earlier ethico-formalist values than a new disciplinary mode for their performance and reform" (297-298). One good example of Carter's "disciplinary mode for reform" is gender and feminist theory but, regrettably, it "has not been formulated in ways that are wholly adequate and appropriate for African, "Third World' women's lives and literature" (Nfah-Abbenyi 18), because "there seems little interest among Western critics to find out how a text is received by readers/spectators who belong to the community the artist is affiliated to through gender, race, culture and

class affinities" (Mukherjee 5). Does this mean, for example, Western readers of Flora Nwapa's novels should travel to Igboland, Eastern Nigeria, and interview all her admirers? I doubt it. Rather, Western critics should stop ignoring "the existing economic and cultural bases of social relationships in the Third World" (Kalu 269) and treating so-called 'third-world literature' merely as minority discourses.

The River Between, Arrow of God, Petals of Blood, Anthills of the Savannah, Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol, and One is Enough are postcolonial discourses on "otherness" and sameness. How do they portray the "self"? The answer is they represent the postcolonial subject as an independent, hybridized identity and indigenous culture as the relative "other" of Westernization. Native culture and language are marginalized by Westernization and English; and the postcolonial landscape is inhabited by ambivalent subjects that embody transcendence and appropriation. Their hybridity is a viable alternative to pristine nativism. They acknowledge the potency of European practices, but do not refute the authenticity of native identity; they also admire the English language. Thus, hybridity, an important element of postcoloniality, does not contest alterity – it neutralizes it. The real tension, in these Anglophone texts, is between varied alterities. In generalized postcolonial theory, hybridity is commonly viewed as undermining identity, and this is also the case in the works that this dissertation has considered. The works infer that everyone is an 'other' in relation to another other, and there is no ontological difference between pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial otherness, only in gender and class relations. In addition, the West and non-West are the same, in matters relating to patriarchal hegemony – which raises the possibility that the global landscape itself is littered with hybridized subjectivities.

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